

# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

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## *JUTLAND.*

BY FLEET SURGEON.

THE time is seven bells in the afternoon watch, and in the wardroom of one of His Majesty's battle-cruisers a yawning marine servant with tousled hair and not too conspicuously clean a face is clattering cups and saucers at regular intervals round the two long tables which are the most obvious objects to be seen. Although it is a bright summer's day on deck, the electric lights are lit, the wardroom skylights are battened down, and the heavy bomb-proof shutters pulled into position. In all the ship, fore and aft, there is not a space where normal daylight can enter except in a few of the senior officers' cabins and down the companion-ways. Without being actually dirty, the whole living spaces are dingy and depressing. On the mess decks the watch below are indulging in their afternoon 'caulk,' stretched out on the tables or stools, with their heads resting on their wooden ditty boxes, which are used as pillows. Their forms are covered by watch coats, old hammocks, or pieces of deck cloth, for the wind blows chilly in the North Sea even on the thirty-first of May.

The wardroom is as depressing as the men's quarters. It measures roughly thirty feet by twenty; the walls are of white painted steel; the floor is of steel covered with corticine, which has been coated with red shellac varnish so that it may not absorb moisture. There are two doorways opening on the port and starboard sides. The furniture is of the simplest possible description, consisting of the two long tables already mentioned, a smaller table, two sofas, three easy-chairs, two fixed settees about ten feet long, a dilapidated-looking piano covered with bundles of torn music, and two sideboards in alcoves, in each of which is a sliding hatch communicating with the pantry. The walls are bare except for a photograph of the sinking *Bluecher*, an engraving of an earlier namesake of the ship, and some charts and war maps hanging limply from drawing-pins,

which fix them to wooden battens. In one corner is a coal stove, the polished brass funnel of which, passing to the deck above, is the only bright object in the room. Suspended from the beams by their cords and covered with yellow silken shades whose colour has long ago lost its pristine freshness and daintiness, are the electric lights. The gentle swaying of the shades is the only indication that the ship is at sea. Thanks to her turbine machinery, no noise or movement can be felt, and she might be lying in harbour for all there is to indicate otherwise.

The ship herself is one of the mammoths of the sea. When describing her in comparison with any other ship, apply superlatives and you will dimly reach some idea of her qualities. She is the largest, fastest, most heavily armed, best armoured, best equipped, highest horse-powered, best arranged engine of destruction of her time. Compared with a merchant ship, she has over twice the horse-power of the *Aquitania*. Her crew is well over a thousand. She has been blooded already, and her officers have supreme confidence in her and themselves. For over an hour, practically single-handed, she has fought the fleeing German battle-cruisers, whilst her supporting consorts were endeavouring to catch her up.

A huge teapot containing a gallon of so-called tea is dropped with a thud on one of the wardroom sideboards. Plates are rattled violently as they are served around the table; there is a crash from the pantry as the third-class officers' steward, who has been sleeping on top of the sink, strikes his yawning elbow against a pile of dirty tumblers left over since lunch-time, and the marine servant shouts out: 'Tea is ready, gentlemen, please!'

There is a general movement from the settees, sofas and arm-chairs where tired officers have been snatching a brief rest. Four uncurl themselves from the small table where they have been sitting on high-backed chairs with their heads resting upon their arms. There is a general movement towards the long tables where the cups, saucers and plates show up startlingly white against the approved Admiralty pattern of serge tablecloth, whose main recommendation to the chooser must have been that it did not show the dirt. The dark red flowers have long ago become hopelessly mixed with the black background which is its most prominent feature when new.

The officers—there are thirty when they are all mustered—sit down at the tables and stare in front of them with the glassy, fixed eyes and owlish expression of those newly awakened from unrefreshing slumber in a tainted atmosphere. The marine servant,

helped by another, carries round the enormous tin teapot and carelessly splashes a portion of the fluid into each cup as he passes. On the table are jugs containing 'tinned cow' and basins of brown sugar which the officers push to one another. For food there is good bread, butter and jam, and some musty fragments of old cake. For five minutes or so the meal is consumed in silence, when a signal messenger enters the wardroom and, with an air of conscious importance, lays a signal on the table beside the senior officer present. That individual gazes casually at it for a second, and then is suddenly galvanised into action. Holding it in both hands, he reads out eagerly: 'Flag to all ships. Our light cruisers report that they have just sighted an enemy light cruiser.'

There is silence for a moment and then a voice is heard: 'So much the worse for the enemy light cruiser!'

The scraping of the chairs against the floor is heard as they are hastily pushed back and the occupants rise, looking for their caps. No need to tell them what that signal means. 'Action stations' will be sounded in a few minutes.

A few whose duties are not so urgent remain behind, making hasty efforts at finishing their tea. They guess it will be a long time before they get the chance of another meal.

'I'm a conscientious objector,' says an engineer officer. 'I want to go home to mummy!'

'And I'm a pacifist,' remarks a lieutenant, 'but that's no reason why I should drink filth as well as think it. Waiter! bring me a cup of freshly-made tea, and don't let the dog get this or you'll poison him.'

'One little cruiser from the Spiritual Home  
Met the British battle boats—  
And then there were none!'

sang in unmelodious, raucous tones a paymaster.

'Oh, shut up!' said another. 'There it goes.'

The bugle-call for 'Action stations' was heard gradually getting louder as the bugle-boy ran along the passage outside.

'That puts the hat on it! No tea, no nuffink! Now for a drop of frightfulness. Wonder whether Fritz has any new gas shells.'

'Put your respirator on first and sniff afterwards,' said a doctor, as they crushed through the doorway together. 'If you really want to sell that Gieve you were blowing about yesterday, I'll give you an I.O.U. for a bob for it.'

'No good!' replied the lieutenant. 'I've sold it to a snotty

for a quid. His people sent him two pounds ten to buy one, and we went a burst on the thirty bob.'

'Well, so long!' said the doctor, as they parted at the bottom of a ladder. 'If you fall into my hands you will be more cut up than I shall be.'

'Go to the devil, you blood-thirsty abomination,' shouted the lieutenant, and, seizing the rungs, ran rapidly up the horizontal ladder.

As he reached the upper deck and ran along towards the bridge ladders, he cast a glance round the horizon. 'Visibility so-so!' he thought; 'but if it gets no worse than at present it will do. Can see 18,000 easily. Clouds a bit low though—not much more than a thousand up.'

He ran up the bridge ladders and finally reached the upper bridge, where the captain and navigating officer, officer of the watch, and signalmen were busy getting ready to go down to the armoured conning-tower. Above him towered the foremast, a central thick steel tube supported by two smaller steel tubes running down and outwards to the deck. On the after side of the central tube, dropped steel rungs were let into the mast; and, seizing hold of these, he climbed rapidly upwards until he reached the trap-door communicating with the top. Pushing up the door, he pulled himself bodily upwards and at last stood on the platform, a hundred and twenty feet above the level of the sea.

He was in a circular box about ten feet in diameter, covered with a roof and with bulwarks rising breast-high all the way round. His duty was spotting for the secondary armament, and to assist him there were two other officers and eight men acting as range-takers, messengers, timekeepers, and in charge of deflection instruments. He gave the range for the guns to the transmitting station, watched the fall of the shot, estimated its distance over or short of the target, and supplied the necessary corrections. As it was useless to expect that firing the secondary guns would be of any value until the range came down to about 12,000 yards, or to repel destroyer or light cruiser attack, there would be a long interval of waiting before he would have anything to do. Meanwhile, he went round the instruments and saw that they were all in working order, tested the voice tubes, and gave hints and instructions to his subordinates.

The sky was rapidly becoming more overcast and the clouds were lower, although the horizon was still plainly visible.

A message came up the voice-tube from the conning-tower,



warning him to keep a sharp look-out on the port bow as the enemy battle-cruisers should be shortly sighted proceeding in a northerly direction. Every sense was subordinated to that of sight, and in the tense stillness he strained his eyes until the sockets hurt. Looking down on the ship, which was spread like a map beneath his feet, no sign of life was visible, although behind armoured side and beneath thick steel hoods eager-eyed men were chafing at the delay.

It was easy to see that the ships were travelling at full speed, and the smoke belching from the ships ahead blurred his view and damaged his eyes until he remembered the pair of motor goggles he had supplied himself with.

Suddenly his attention was riveted by a small patch of the horizon where the haze seemed slightly thicker than elsewhere. To anyone who had not spent long weary hours watching for just such a haze it would have suggested nothing at all, even if it had been observed. He picked up his binoculars, which were hanging round his neck from a strap, and took a long, long look.

The other two officers watched his face carefully. Suddenly he dropped the glasses from his eyes and turned to his companions. 'Yes; that's the enemy battle-cruisers all right. They are making a sixteen-point turn. I wonder what their game is. Are they running away as they did at the Dogger Bank, or are they falling back on the High Seas Fleet. Anyhow, there's the *Engadine* sending up a seaplane.'

He watched the movements of the seaplane ship for a few minutes, and then heaved a sigh of relief as a gigantic bird rose in flight from her side.

'We haven't sighted any of their Zeppelins yet and they would be useless in this atmosphere. If I know anything of the *Engadine's* people, we shall get all the information we need in a little.'

If anything, there was an access of speed on the part of the British ships. The officers in the top cowered behind the steel bulwark which protected them a little; but tiny hurricanes played around their coats and caps and pierced the almost Arctic clothing they were wearing.

The enemy ships were rapidly becoming distinguishable as funnels and masts hurrying beneath a pall of smoke. The hulls were still under the rim of the horizon, but were gradually rising.

'When we can see the hulls the range will be approximately

24,000 yards, and firing will open any time after that,' remarked the lieutenant to an officer whose first action this was.

Meanwhile, the range-finder was being rapidly adjusted by an able seaman who, seated behind it, commenced singing out in a monotonous voice with the suspicion of a shake of excitement in it: '22,000—20,500—19,000—18,000.'

As he reached the last figure, there was a spattering sound in the seas on their port side, and huge columns of spray were thrown 200 feet up in the air. Driven back by the wind, sheets of water swept against the top and drenched the luckless crew. Heedless, the lieutenant watched the fall of the shot and muttered: 'Five hundred short. Damned good effort at opening the ball.'

As he spoke there was a thundering roar from the ship beneath him, and he instinctively stepped back from the edge of the top to avoid the blast from the guns beneath. 'That's A turret firing'; and as he traced the flight of the huge projectile which was plainly visible winging its way towards the distant speck, he waited anxiously for the splash which would indicate its fall. 'Good hunting! About five hundred short, too!'

These were not his guns and were not under his control; but he knew that the capable lieutenant spotting in the gun control tower below him, and the warrant officer in the top twenty feet above him, would speedily correct the error. His job was to wait and watch.

The action had become general. Shells, looking like Gargantuan hailstones, were falling on every side of him; while columns of water, like geysers, were rising everywhere and obscuring the range. As a shell whizzed past them and its breath pushed them farther back into the top, a shout of admiration escaped him. 'Straddled in the third salvo! Oh, by Jove! good shooting! Hope we're doing as well!'

The top rocked to the thundering reverberation of our own guns; the air was thick with the cordite smoke; the whistle and shriek of shells as they passed, hit, or burst short were as insistent as the noise of a railway engine's whistle in a tunnel; sheets of spray were wafted up to them and fell like waterfalls without making any distinguishable sound; whilst, as he caught sight of them between the showers, the range-finder's voice, all trace of excitement gone, went on with its monotonous sing-song: '17,000—16,500—15,000.'

For a second the officer glanced at the ships ahead. Even as he turned, he saw three enemy shells falling on the next ahead.

The voice of the man at the range-finder again took up the refrain: '15,000—14,500—14,000.'

The hulls of the enemy ships were now plainly visible, but the range was still too great for the secondary armament to be of any value against the thickly armoured sides of the German ships. Would they never come any nearer? As if in reply to his question, he suddenly saw a line of low black hulls emerge from behind the enemy ships and come tearing in a line diagonally towards him.

Here was work at last! Seizing the navyphone, he shouted down to the captain: 'Destroyer attack on the port bow. Request permission to open fire.' The reply came back: 'Open fire at 10,000.'

Dropping the navyphone, he picked up the voice tube and commenced the orders to the transmitting station which would let loose six thousand six hundred pounds of shell per minute at the rapidly approaching enemy.

'Destroyer. One mast, two funnels.

'Range 9500. Deflection 16 right. Rate 550 closing.

'Load with lyddite. Salvoes.

'Shoot!'

Anxiously he gazed at the leader of the approaching destroyers. Good shooting, but a little to the left. Undoubtedly she was hit or, at least, badly splattered, as she altered course a little. Correcting this, he shouted down: 'Shoot!'

Again the deadly hail smothered the little vessel in foam. From the top the men on her decks could be clearly seen training the torpedo tubes and getting ready to fire. As she approached, the order was given: 'Down 400! Shoot!'

There was a sudden burst of speed on the part of the destroyer, which was immediately allowed for.

'Down 400. Close rate 200. Rate 750 closing! Shoot!'

'Good hunting!' he muttered, as the destroyer swerved in her path and, apparently badly injured, commenced to alter her course so as to get out of action.

Smoke and flame were belching from her forward, whilst amidships a ragged hole in her side could be seen from which great clouds of steam came out in gasps. She was heeling towards him, and the crew could be seen plainly through glasses, fitting on their life-belts and dragging at the falls of their badly damaged whaler. Rafts were being cast loose, and the deck was strewn with bodies which,

even as they watched, commenced to roll slowly down the sloping deck.

'Not much need to worry about him!' thought the lieutenant. 'He's finished. Time to get on with the next.'

The second destroyer had been attended to by the ship astern, but the third was still coming on, apparently uninjured. She was rapidly altering both course and speed in order to avoid the deadly salvos and spoil the range-finding.

'Oh, that's your game,' said the officer. 'We'll see what we can do for you.' Speaking down the voice-pipe again, he shouted: 'Object shifted. Third destroyer from left. Range 8500. Same deflection and rate! Salvos! Shoot!'

All-overs was reported by the spotter.

'Down 400. Shoot!'

'One hit, others short!' shouted the spotter.

'Up 200. Shoot!'

There was no need to listen to the spotter this time. The middle of the destroyer rose in the air and then burst asunder. With a roar, she broke in halves, and bow and stern were elevated skyward until she assumed the shape of the letter V. Almost instantaneously she disappeared. As she did so, she went straight downwards as if plucked under by a gigantic hand. The fourth destroyer put her helm hard over and turned sixteen points. She had been hit once by the ship astern and had evidently had enough.

The lieutenant chuckled. 'Gave Fritz what-for that time! Guess our destroyers could have done better than that!'

'Cease firing!'

For the time being, the destroyer attack had been foiled, but others were sure to come, and, smothered in spray, the men on the top kept anxiously on the alert. As they looked ahead, they saw first one, then another, then several separate clouds of smoke on the horizon. The German battle-cruisers were heading straight for them, and the meaning of that was all too plain. Evidently these distant vessels were the German High Seas Fleet. The range of the German battle-cruisers was rapidly getting less, and it was possible to start shooting at them with the secondary armament with a fair chance of hitting.

The lieutenant began to give his orders again, after asking permission from the captain. And, busy and capable as he was professionally, another part of his brain was speaking to his inner consciousness. 'This is *Der Tag* at last. Thank heaven we're in it. Verdun must have been a failure. Where is Jellicoe? We

can't take on all these beggars by ourselves! Wonder how long Beatty is going to carry on! Their guns are badly rattled: they haven't hit us a fair smack for over an hour.'

The rapidly advancing High Seas Fleet was approaching the parallel lines of fighting battle-cruisers. Still Beatty held on! But the lieutenant had no doubts in his own mind. 'Jellicoe can't be far away, and we are going to hold them until he comes up. May it be soon!'

Still the battle-cruisers held on, while the German battleships commenced firing at long ranges.

At last the signal to go about was given, and the helm was jammed hard a-port so that the big ship heeled heavily over as she spun round. As she did so, it was obvious enough that the German battle-cruisers were doing the same and racing back in the direction they had come. They had apparently got the idea that Beatty was trying to avoid them and was suffering too much punishment to be able to reply effectually. But that officer had his own game to play and knew as soon as the German battle-cruisers turned immediately after him that they had fallen into the very error he had desired them to make.

The Fifth Battle Squadron had now joined up and was engaging both the enemy's cruisers and battleships, and, as far as the battle was concerned, the day was now more in favour of the British.

As the ships swung round, one after the other, keeping perfect station as if at manœuvres, they fired their broadsides with telling effect, which was plainly seen, at the German battleships, which responded indifferently.

It was easy for those in the top to guess what Beatty's tactics were. Evidently, Jellicoe was somewhere up in the north-west, and the whole German Fleet were walking straight into his hands. If only the light would hold, but already, although it was barely 5 p.m., the horizon was becoming misty and the outlines of the enemy ships were no longer sharply defined. To control effectively this long length of battle line, good light was absolutely essential.

Still Beatty sped along, keeping station on the German cruisers at 13,000 yards, leaving their battleships to the Fifth Battle Squadron. The Germans by this time were suffering heavily, and the *Lutzw* was seen to drop out of the line.

Suddenly, ahead on the port bow, were seen the welcome signs of the Grand Fleet arriving at last. There was no longer any doubt as to what the result would be. Inevitable defeat was staring the Germans in the face. With the instinct of the born fighting sailor,

Beatty seized the chance to turn the German defeat into a rout. The battle-cruisers leaped ahead at full speed and he dashed like a fury across towards the head of the German line in order to concentrate on their leading ships and crumple their formation. The manœuvre was perfectly successful. The German line bent, broke and fled, but the thick mist which had gradually been coming down robbed Jellicoe of the fruits of his victory. As the Grand Fleet deployed into line and brought their guns to bear on the enemy's line, they found for target an occasional wraith-like hull appearing for a few seconds between the banks of smoke and fog. The battle-cruisers were in the same quandary, firing at intervals at the flashes which showed the position of the German ships. The utmost confusion apparently reigned on board them, and in the thick fog and scattered condition of both fleets, to go on with the action was impossible.

Once again, as often before, the weather conditions had favoured the defeated, and both fleets mutually broke off action—the Germans to flee for their home ports, and the British to re-form for the battle at dawn.

During the night, that best test of the morale of a fleet, a destroyer attack, was carried out by the British with marked success; but there was no retaliation on the part of the Germans. They had had enough and more than enough.

At 10.30 P.M. a group of stiff and wearied officers left the top and made for the wardroom to get some food. The forsaken afternoon tea was still standing as it had been left on the table, and, lying about on chairs, sofas and settees, were men too wearied even to desire to eat.

They sat and looked at one another and said nothing. Members of the mess who had been joyfully skylarking eight hours before would never draw their chairs up to the table again. One who had left his cup of tea untasted had drunk to the dregs the cup that Death had offered him. Only one officer made a remark: 'The action is to be resumed at dawn.' And only one man made a reply: 'They won't get away this time.'

But they did. A Zeppelin was sighted at 3.30 A.M., evidently shadowing the British Fleet. For ten hours they cruised over the battle area strewn with the horrible relics of the fight, but the Germans were nowhere to be seen. They had gone home to celebrate their victory by getting their wounded into hospital, their dead buried, and their sunken ships renamed.

## IN THE WOOD.

BY BOYD CABLE.

THE attack on the wood had begun soon after dawn, and it was no more than 8 A.M. when the Corporal was dropped badly wounded in the advance line of the attack where it had penetrated about four hundred yards into the wood. But it was well into afternoon before he sufficiently woke to his surroundings to understand where he was or what had happened, and when he did so he found the realisation sufficiently unpleasant. It was plain from several indications—the direction from which the shells bursting in his vicinity were coming, a glimpse of some wounded Germans retiring, the echoing rattle of rifle fire and crash of bombs behind him—that the battalion had been driven back, as half a dozen other battalions had been driven back in the course of the ebb-and-flow fighting through the wood for a couple of weeks past, that he was lying badly wounded and helpless to defend himself where the Germans could pick him up as a prisoner or finish him off with a saw-backed bayonet as the mood of his discoverers turned. His left leg was broken below the knee, his right shoulder and ribs ached intolerably, a scalp wound six inches long ran across his head from side to side—a wound that, thanks to the steel shrapnel helmet lying dented in deep across the crown, had not split his head open to the teeth.

He felt, as he put it to himself, 'done in,' so utterly done in, that for a good hour he was willing to let it go at that, to lie still and wait whatever luck brought him, almost indifferent as to whether it would be another rush that would advance the British line and bring him within reach of his own stretcher-bearers, or his discovery by some of the German soldiers who passed every now and then close to where he lay.

Thirst drove him to fumble for his water-bottle, only to find, when he had twisted it round, that a bullet had punctured it, and that it was dry; and, after fifteen tortured minutes, thirst drove him to the impossible, and brought him crawling and dragging his broken leg to a dead body and its full bottle. An eager, choking swallow and a long breath-stopping, gurgling draught gave him more life than he had ever thought to feel again, a sudden revulsion of feeling against the thought of waiting helpless there to be picked up and carted to a German prison camp or butchered where he lay, a quick



hope and a desperate resolve to attempt to escape such a fate. He had managed to crawl to the water-bottle; he would attempt to crawl at least a little nearer to the fighting lines, to where he would have more chance of coming under the hands of his own men. Without waste of time he took hasty stock of his wounds and set about preparing for his attempt. The broken leg was the most seriously crippling, but with puttees, bayonets, and trenching-tool handles he so splinted and bound it about that he felt he could crawl and drag it behind him. He attempted to bandage his head, but his arm and shoulder were so stiff and painful when he lifted his hand to his head that he desisted and satisfied himself with a water-soaked pad placed inside a shrapnel helmet. Then he set out to crawl.

It is hard to convey to anyone who has not seen such a place, the horrible difficulty of the task the Corporal had set himself. The wood had been shelled for weeks, until almost every tree in it had been smashed and knocked down and lay in a wild tangle of trunks, tops, and branches on the ground. The ground itself was pitted with big and little shell-holes, seamed with deep trenches, littered with whole and broken arms and equipments, German and British grenades and bombs, scattered thick with British and German dead who had lain there for any time from hours to weeks. And into and over it all the shells were still crashing and roaring. The air palpitated to their savage rushing, the ground trembled to the impact of their fall, and without pause or break the deep roll of the drumming gun-fire bellowed and thundered. But through all the chaos men were still fighting, and would continue to fight, and the Corporal had set his mind doggedly to come somewhere near to where they fought. The penetration of such a jungle might have seemed impossible even to a sound and uninjured man; to one in his plight it appeared mere madness to attempt. And yet to attempt it he was determined, and being without any other idea in his throbbing head but the sole one of overcoming each obstacle as he came to it, had no time to consider the impossibility of the complete task.

Now, two hundred yards is a short distance as measurement goes, but into those two hundred yards through the chaos of wrecked wood the Corporal packed as much suffering, as dragging a passage of time, as many tortures of hope and fear and pain, as would fill an ordinary lifetime. Every yard was a desperate struggle, every fallen tree-trunk, each tangle of fallen branch, was a cruel problem to be solved, a pain-racked and laborious effort to overcome. A score of times he collapsed and lay panting, and resigned



himself to abandoning the struggle ; and a score of times he roused himself and fought down numbing pain, and raised himself on trembling arms and knees to crawl again, to wriggle through the wreckage, to hoist himself over some obstacle, to fight his way on for another yard or two. Every conscious thought was busied only and solely with the problems of his passage that presented themselves one by one, but at the back of his mind some self-working reason or instinct held him to his direction, took heed of what went on around him, guided him in action other than that immediately concerned with his passage. When, for instance, he came to a deep trench cutting across his path, he sat long with his whole mind occupied on the question as to whether he should move to right or left, whether the broken place half a dozen yards off the one way or the more completely broken one a dozen yards the other would be the best to make for, scanning this way down and that way up, a litter of barbed wire here and a barrier of broken branches there ; and yet, without even lifting his mind from the problem, he was aware of grey coats moving along the trench towards him, had sense enough to drop flat and lie huddled and still until the Germans had passed. And that second mind again advised him against crawling down into the trench and making his easier way along it, because it was too probable it would be in use as a passage for Germans, wounded and unwounded.

He turned and moved slowly along the edge of the trench at last, and held to it for some distance because the parapet raised along its edge held up many of the fallen trees and branches enough to let him creep under them. That advantage was discounted to some extent by the number of dead bodies that lay heaped on or under the parapet and told of the struggles and the fierce fighting that had passed for possession of the trench, but on the whole the dead men were less difficult to pass than the clutching, wrenching fingers of the dead wood. The pains in his head, shoulder, and side had by now dulled down to a dead numbness, but his broken leg never ceased to burn and stab with red-hot needles of agony ; and for all the splints encasing it and despite all the care he took, there was hardly a yard of his passage that was not marked by some wrenching catch on his foot, some jarring shock or grind and grate of the broken bones.

He lost count of time, he lost count of distance, but he kept on crawling. He was utterly indifferent to the turmoil of the guns, to the rush and yell of the near-falling shells, the crash of their bursts, the whirl of the flying splinters. When he had been well

and whole these things would have brought his heart to his mouth, would have set him ducking and dodging and shrinking. Now he paid them no fraction of his absorbed attention. But to the distinctive and rising sounds of bursting grenades, to the sharp whip and whistle of rifle bullets about him and through the leaves and twigs, he gave eager attention because they told him he was nearing his goal, was coming at last to somewhere near the fringe of the fighting. His limbs were trembling under him, he was throbbing with pain from head to foot, his head was swimming and his vision was blurred and dim, and at last he was forced to drop and lie still and fight to recover strength to move, and sense to direct his strength. His mind cleared slowly, and he saw at last that he had come to a slightly clearer part of the wood, to a portion nearer its edge where the trees had thinned a little and where the full force of the shell blast had wrecked and re-wrecked and torn fallen trunks and branches to fragments.

But although his mind had recovered, his body had not. He found he could barely raise himself on his shaking arms—had not the strength to crawl another yard. He tried and tried again, moved no more than bare inches, and had to drop motionless again.

And there he lay and watched a fresh attack launched by the British into the wood, heard and saw the tornado of shell-fire that poured crashing and rending and shattering into the trees, watched the khaki figures swarm forward through the smoke, the spitting flames of the rifles, the spurting fire and smoke of the flung grenades. He still lay on the edge of the broken trench along which he had crept, and he could just make out that this ran off at an angle away from him and that it was held by the Germans, and formed probably the point of the British attack. He watched the attack with consuming eagerness, hope flaming high as he saw the khaki line press forward, sinking again to leaden depths as it halted or held or swayed back. To him the attack was an affair much more vital than the taking of the trench, the advance by a few score yards of the British line. To him it meant that a successful advance would bring him again within the British lines, its failure leave him still within the German.

Into the trench below him a knot of Germans scrambled scuffling, and he lay huddled there almost within arm's length of them while they hoisted a couple of machine-guns to the edge of the trench and manned the parapet and opened a hail of fire down the length of the struggling British line. Under that streaming fire the line wilted and withered; a fresh torrent of fire smote it, and it crumpled

and gave and ebbed back. But almost immediately another line swarmed up out of the smoke and swept forward, and this time, although the same flank and frontal fire caught and smote it, the line straggled and swayed forward and plunged into and over the German trench.

The Corporal lying there on the trench edge was suddenly aware of a stir amongst the men below him. The edge where he lay half screened in a débris of green stuff and huddled beside a couple of dead Germans was broken down enough to let him see well into the trench, and he understood to the full the meaning of the movements of the Germans in the trench, of their hasty hauling down of the machine-guns, their scrambling retirement crouched and hurrying along the trench back in the direction from which he had come. The trench the British had taken ran out at a right angle from this one where he lay, and the Germans near him were retiring behind the line of trench that had been taken. And that meant he was as good as saved.

A minute later two khaki figures emerged from a torn thicket of tree stumps and branches a dozen yards beyond the trench where he lay, and ran on across towards the denser wood into which the Germans had retreated. One was an officer, and close on their heels came half a dozen, a dozen, a score of men, all following close and pressing on to the wood and opening out as they went. One came to the edge of the trench where the machine-guns had been, and the Corporal with an effort lifted and waved an arm and shouted hoarsely to him. But even as he did so he realised how futile his shout was, how impossible it was for it to carry even the few yards in the pandemonium of noise that raved about them. But he shouted again, and yet again, and felt bitter disappointment as the man without noticing turned and moved along the trench, peering down into it.

The Corporal had a sudden sense of someone moving behind him, and twisted round in time to see another khaki figure moving past a dozen paces away and the upper half bodies of half a score more struggling through the thickets beyond. This time he screamed at them, but they too passed unhearing and unheeding. The Corporal dropped quivering and trying to tell himself that it was all right, that there would be others following, that some of them must come along the trench, that the stretcher-bearers would be following close.

But for the moment none followed them, and from where they had vanished came a renewed uproar of grenade-bursts and rifle

fire beating out and through the uproar of the guns and the screaming, crashing shells. The Corporal saw a couple of wounded come staggering back . . . the tumult of near fighting died down . . . a line of German grey-clad shoulders and bobbing 'coal-scuttle' helmets plunged through and beyond the thicket from which the khaki had emerged a few minutes before. And then back into the trench below him scuffled the Germans with their two machine-guns. With a groan the Corporal dropped his face in the dirt and dead leaves and groaned hopelessly. He was 'done in,' he told himself, 'clean done in.' He could see no chance of escape. The line had been driven back, and the last ounce of strength to crawl . . . He tried once more before he would finally admit that last ounce gone, but the effort was too much for his exhausted limbs and pain-wrenched body. He dropped to the ground again.

The rapid clatter of the two machine-guns close to him lifted his head to watch. The main German trench was spouting dust and débris, flying clouds of leaves, flashing white slivers of bark and wood, under the torrent of shells that poured on it once more. The machine-guns below him ceased, and the Corporal concluded that their target had gone for the moment. But that intense bombardment of the trench almost certainly meant the launching of another British attack, and then the machine-guns would find their target struggling again across their sights and under their streaming fire. They had a good 'field of fire,' too, as the Corporal could see. The British line had to advance for the most part through the waist-high tangle of wrecked wood, but by chance or design a clearer patch of ground was swept close to the German trench, and as the advance crossed this the two machine-guns on the flank near the Corporal would get in their work, would sweep it in enfilade, would be probably the worst obstacle to the advance. And at that a riot of thoughts swept the Corporal's mind. If he could out those machine-guns . . . if he could out those machine-guns . . . but how? There were plenty of rifles near, and plenty of dead about with cartridges on them . . . but one shot would bring the Germans jumping from their trench on him. . . . Bombs now . . . if he had some Mills' grenades . . . where had he seen . . .

He steadied himself deliberately and thought back. The whole wood was littered with grenades, spilt and scattered broadcast singly and in heaps—German stick-grenades and Mills'. He remembered crawling past a dead bomber with a bag full of Mills' beside him only a score of yards away. Could he crawl to them and back again? The Germans in the trench might see him;

and anyhow—hadn't he tried? And hadn't he found the last ounce of his strength gone?

But he found another last ounce. He half crawled, half dragged himself back and found his bag of grenades, and with the full bag hooked over his shoulder and a grenade clutched ready in his hand felt himself a new man. His strength was gone, but it takes little strength to pull the pin of a grenade, and if any German rushed him now, at least they'd go together.

The machine-guns broke out again, and the Corporal, gasping and straining, struggled foot by foot back towards them. The personal side—the question of his own situation and chances of escape—had left him. He had forgotten himself. His whole mind was centred on the attack, on the effect of those machine-guns' fire, on the taking of the German trench. He struggled past the break in the trench and on until he had shelter behind the low parapet. He wanted some cover. One grenade wasn't enough. He wanted to make sure, and he wouldn't chance a splinter from his own bomb.

The machine-guns were chattering and clattering at top speed, and as he pulled the pin of his first grenade the Corporal saw another gun being dragged up beside the others. He held his grenade and counted 'one-and-two-and-throw—' and lobbed the grenade over into the trench under the very feet of the machine-gunners. He hastily pulled another pin and threw the grenade . . . and as a spurt of smoke and dust leaped from the trench before him and the first grenades *crash-crashed*, he went on pulling out the pins and flinging over others as fast as he could pitch. The trench spouted fire and dust and flying dirt and débris, the ground shook beneath him, he was half stunned with the quick-following reports—but the machine-guns had stopped on the first burst.

That was all he remembered. This time the last ounce was really gone, and he was practically unconscious when the stretcher-bearers found him after the trench was taken and the attack had passed on deep into the wood.

And weeks after, lying snug in bed in a London hospital, after a Sister had scolded him for moving in bed and reaching out for a magazine that had dropped to the floor, and told him how urgent it was that he must not move, and how a fractured leg like his must be treated gently and carefully if he did not wish to be a cripple for life, and so on and so forth, he grinned up cheerfully at her. 'Orright, Sister,' he said, 'I'll remember. But it's a good job for me I didn't know all that, back there—in the wood.'

## A TALK WITH COLERIDGE.

*Abstract of a discourse with Mr. Coleridge on the state of the country in December 1830, written at the time by John Frere.<sup>1</sup>*

[WHILE staying with the daughter of Mr. John Frere I came across this paper in one of the many manuscript volumes in his writing. Educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, he was one of those known as the 'Apostles' at Cambridge, and Charles and Alfred Tennyson were among his friends as well as Arthur Hallam, whom he admired greatly, and Coleridge.

□ The volume is a quaint collection of many things—original verses, extracts from books, and notes of sermons; and the reader can only wish that a few of the evenings spent with the Apostles might have been recorded within these marbled covers.

But this one conversation has a charm peculiarly its own, and we will no longer keep the reader from entering the Hampstead room well known to the literary men of the day, where silently he may observe an old-world courtesy and ceremony belonging to a past age, while listening to a discourse only too seldom to be heard.]

C. Is there anything stirring now in the world of letters, anything in the shape of poetry lately produced, for I see nothing of the sort, nor even a Review that is not a year old?

F. No, Sir, at least I have heard no talk of any such thing; these continual burnings occupy all men's thoughts and conversation.

□ C. And what remedies are proposed? They talk I suppose of retrenchments, but what good can retrenchment do? Alas! revolutionary times are times of general demoralisation; what great men do they ever produce? What was produced by the late

<sup>1</sup> John Frere was the eldest son of George Frere of Lincoln's Inn and Twyford, Herts, who was third son of John Frere of Roydon, Norfolk. He was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge; B.A. 1830, M.A. 1833, 2nd class Classical Tripos, 1st Sen. Op.; Curate of Hadleigh, Suffolk, under Archdeacon Lyall; Chaplain to Blomfield, Bishop of London; Rector of Cottenham, Cambs, 1839. Married Jane B. Dalton, 1839. Died May 21, 1851. He was first curate of Wakes Colne, Essex, at that time held with Messing Vicarage.

Revolutionary Spirit in France? There must be something uppermost to be sure in such disturbances; some military superiority, but what great—I mean truly great—man was produced?

In England the same spirit was curbed in and worsted by the moral sense, afterwards there followed times of repose, and the Muses began to show themselves. But now what is going forward? The depravity of the spirit of the times is marked by the absence of poetry. For it is a great mistake to suppose that thought is not necessary for poetry; true, at the time of composition there is that starlight, a dim and holy twilight; but is not light necessary before?

Poetry is the highest effort of the mind; all the powers are in a state of equilibrium and equally energetic, the knowledge of individual existence is forgotten, the man is out of himself and exists in all things, his eye in a fine &c.

There is no one perhaps who composes with more facility than your Uncle; but does it cost him nothing before? It is the result of long thought; and poetry as I have before observed must be the result of thought, and the want of thought in what is now called poetry is a bad sign of the times.

There is a want of the proper spirit; if a nation would flourish (politically speaking) there must be a desire in the breast of each man of something more than merely to live—he must desire to live well; and if men cannot live well at home they will go and live well elsewhere. The condition upon which a country circumstanced as ours is exists, is that it should become the Mother of Empires, and this Mr. W. Horton feels, but his plans are not extensive or universal enough. I had a conversation with him, but could not make him enter into my views. We ought to send out colonies, but not privately or by parishes; it should be a grand National concern; there should be in every family one or more brought up for this and this alone.

A Father should say, 'There, John now is a fine strong fellow and an enterprising lad, he shall be a colonist.'

But then some fool like Lord — gets up and tells us 'Oh no! America should be a warning.'

Good Heavens, Sir! a warning, and of what? Are we to beware of having 2 [sets?] of men bound to us by the ties of allegiance and of affinity; 2 [sets] of men in a distant part of the world speaking the language of Shakspear and Milton, and living under the laws of Alfred. But a warning they should be to us, to give



freely and in good time that liberty which is their due, and which they will properly extort from us if we withhold.

*F.* Is it not moreover true, Sir, that we should show ourselves really a Mother and not a Stepmother to those Empires which we found? We should with a nursing hand lead them through the dangers of infancy; but why keep them in leading strings when they are able to act for themselves? We should relax our hold by slow degrees as they are able to bear it, and nurture them to be free and manly states, and not the slaves of any, still less of their own Mother. What Mother ever complains of the ingratitude of her Son because he does not follow at her apron-strings all the days of his life? Why then do we complain of America, who with greater justice might complain of us that we have been far from remembering one great duty, namely that a Mother if need be should even sacrifice herself for her child?

*C.* What you say is very true; but with regard to the execution of a plan of Colonisation, why should we not make the absurd system of Poor Laws subservient to the measure?

Why not, since as Sir N. T.<sup>1</sup> told Bartle the other day, An offer and refusal is as good as an acceptance, propose to any person requiring assistance of the overseer the following terms:—We have it is true bound ourselves by a most foolish promise to find you work; we have none here, but if you choose to go out to the Swan River, you shall have as much as you want, and we will carry you out there, your wife and your children too, if you have them, and you shall get your livelihood in an honorable and independent way—and mind you are now to consider us discharged of our promise to find you work.

*F.* It is true that this would be fair enough, but as long as the poor man sees the rich enjoy a liberty which he does not, viz. that of living in the land in which he was born, he would complain, and not without reason. Let then the young and active in the higher ranks set them the example. And why should the unlearned be deprived of the countenance and assistance of the wiser? What can hand do without head, especially in untamed countries? Heaven knows the labouring classes have been most iniquitously considered for some time and are now becoming, as Mr. Coleridge says, more things than persons, and are therefore more than ever unfit to be sent alone.

*C.* And therefore the younger sons of noblemen and the fops

<sup>1</sup> Possibly Sir Nathaniel Tooke, a celebrated politician of those times.



of town would have been employed in a manner much better for their country, and more happy for themselves had they been brought up as members and limbs of a colony instead of thrusting themselves into situations to which they do not naturally belong, and to the exclusion of all competition, or wasting their energies at Newmarket or in Crockfords.

C. Almost all thinking Jews are Deists. I wonder Mr. — should ever have talked with you on those subjects; the persecution which a Jew would undergo from his brethren if it was known that he did so, is not to be calculated. The life, you know, of Spinoza was twice attempted, but he professed Christianity, at least in his way in a letter to a friend; for he said that if the Logos could be manifested in the flesh, it must converse and act as Jesus did. At the same time his notions of a God were very Pantheistic, a  $\odot^{\text{lo}}$ . whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere. He had no notion of a Conscious Being of a God—but with these ideas to talk of God becoming flesh appears to me very much like talking of a square  $\odot^{\text{lo}}$ .

Spinoza is a man whom I most deeply reverence, I was going to say whom I reverence as much as it is possible for me to reverence any creature. He was on the borders of the truth, and would no doubt had he lived have attained it.

But bless me! to talk of converting the Jews, people are not aware of what they undertake.

Mr. — say'd to me, and I thought very beautifully, 'Convert the Jews! Alas, Sir, Mammon and Ignorance are the two giant porters who stand at the gates of Jerusalem and forbid the entrance of Truth.'

F. You have not read much of Keats, Sir, I think.

C. No, I have not. I have seen two Sonnets which I think showed marks of a great genius had he lived. I have also read a poem with a classical name—I forget what. Poor Keats, I saw him once. Mr. Green,<sup>1</sup> whom you have heard me mention, and I were walking out in these parts, and we were overtaken by a young man of a very striking countenance whom Mr. Green recognised and shook hands with, mentioning my name; I wish Mr. Green had introduced me, for I did not know who it was. He passed on, but

<sup>1</sup> Possibly Rev. George Rowney Green, Fellow of Eton and grandfather to the finder of this paper.

in a few moments sprung back and said, 'Mr. Coleridge, allow me the honour of shaking your hand.'

I was struck by the energy of his manner, and gave him my hand.

He passed on and we stood still looking after him, when Mr. Green said,

'Do you know who that is? That is Keats, the poet.'

'Heavens!' said I, 'when I shook him by the hand there was death!' This was about two years before he died.

F. But what was it?

C. I cannot describe it. There was a heat and a dampness in the hand. To say that his death was caused by the Review is absurd, but at the same time it is impossible adequately to conceive the effect which it must have had on his mind.

It is very well for those who have a place in the world and are independent to talk of these things, they can bear such a blow, so can those who have a strong religious principle; but all men are not born Philosophers, and all men have not those advantages of birth and education.

Poor Keats had not, and it is impossible I say to conceive the effect which such a Review<sup>1</sup> must have had upon him, knowing as he did that he had his way to make in the world by his own exertions, and conscious of the genius within him.

Have you seen, Mr. F., anything of Lord Byron's poetry?

F. Nothing, Sir, but the Translation of 'Faust.'

C. And what do you think of that?

F. Being unacquainted, Sir, with the original I cannot speak of its merits as a translation. As a poem I think it meagre, nor do I conceive that the metres are adapted to the subject in English whatever they may be in German.

C. I have been asked why I did not translate the camp scenes in 'Wallenstein.'

<sup>1</sup> These lines were written by Byron in July 1821:

Who kill'd John Keats?  
'I,' says the *Quarterly*,  
So savage and Tartarly;  
'Twas one of my feats.'

Who shot the arrow?  
'The poet-priest Milman  
(So ready to kill man),  
Or Southey or Barrow.'

The truth is that the labour would have been immense, and besides it would not have been borne in English, to say nothing of the fact that Mrs. Barbauld reviewed my translation of the rest of the play and abused it through thick and thin, so that it sold for wastepaper. I remember your uncle telling me that he had picked it up—he approved it, so did Canning to whom he showed it—and so might one or two more, but the edition sold for wastepaper.

F. Had you ever any thought of translating the 'Faust'?

C. Yes, Sir, I had, but I was prevented by the consideration that though there are some exquisite passages, the opening chorus, the chapel and the prison scenes for instance, to say nothing of the Brocken scene where he has shown peculiar strength in keeping clear of Shakspear, he has not taken that wonderful admixture of Witch Fate and Fairy but has kept to the real original witch, and this suits his purpose much better. I say that a great deal of it I do not admire, and some I reprobate. The conception of Wagner is bad: whoever heard of a man who had gained such wonderful proficiency in learning as to call up spirits &c. being discontented?

No, it is not having the power of knowledge that would make a man discontented—neither would such a man have suddenly become a sensualist. The discourses too with the pupil are dull. The Mephistapholes (*sic*), or whatever the name is, is well executed, but the conception is not original. It was — who had before said, 'The Devil is the great humourist of the world.' There are other parts too which I could not have translated without entering my protest against them in a manner which would hardly have been fair upon the author, for those things are understood in Germany in a spirit very different from what they would infuse here in England. To give you an example, the scene where Mephistopheles is introduced as coming before the Almighty and talking with Him would never be borne in English and this whole scene is founded on a mistranslation of a passage in Scripture, the opening of Job. You remember how Satan means properly one who goes his rounds, and hence it came to mean one of those officers whom the King in Eastern countries used to send round to see how his subjects were going on. This power was soon abused and the Satans used to accuse people falsely, and hence the word came to have the meaning now attached to it of a calumniator, a διάβολος, an accuser.

Now in the Book of Job (which is undoubtedly very ancient, before the law for there is no mention of the law in it, undoubtedly

the most ancient book in the world) the word Satan meant only this officer, the prime vizier of the Sultan (you remember in the 'Arabian Nights' the Caliph and his vizier are very fond of going their rounds for the same purpose). God Almighty is shown to us under the semblance of a mortal king holding his court, and his officer comes, as the book tells us, 'from going his rounds on the earth and walking up and down in it,' but mind there is nothing like malignity attached to him.

The King asks him concerning Job—the officer answers that he is a perfect man—but (adds he) 'He has yet had no temptation; he is prosperous, and he might alter if his circumstances were altered.'

The King then commands him to try and to destroy his possessions. (N.B.—This is a mistake, *He gives him leave.*)

Again on another day the same things happen and when the officer is asked about Job he says 'He is yet integer but many men will do this. I can say nothing for his integrity as long as his possessions only are touched; but stretch out your hand against his person and see if he will curse Thee then?' It is evident that there is no suggestion, no evil in the officer at all—indeed the belief in Angels and that sort of poultry is nowhere countenanced in the Old Testament and in the New, nowhere else.

*F.* Indeed, Sir, I think I know a very strong passage.

*C.* Well, what is it?

*F.* Our Saviour tells his disciples when alone with them and apart that a certain kind of Devils goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

*C.* Well, and what has that to do with Angels?

*F.* I beg your pardon, Sir. I thought you included devils in your feathered fowl.

*C.* There is nothing I say in the New Testament to countenance the belief in Angels. For what are the three first Gospels? Every one must see that they are mere plain narrations, not of things as they are but of things as they appeared to the ignorant disciples—but when we come to John, Mr. F., there we find the difference. He told things as they were, and therefore you must not believe everything that you read implicitly; and with respect to Devils entering into a man, why it is quite absurd. What do we mean when we say a thing is in another? Why 'in' is merely a relative term. [The argument, though I was compelled to assent to it, I am sorry to say was far above my comprehension, and therefore I could not

catch it, still less bag it and carry it away,—however it proved that there could be no Devils and still less could there be Devils in a man.] Spirit therefore was not more in a man than it was out of him, the mistake arising from a misconception of the word *in*. As for all notions of men with wings, of course they are absurd in the extreme.

I return however to 'Faust.'

*F.* Did you ever see Shelley's translation of the Chorus in 'Faust' you were just mentioning?

*C.* I have, and admire it very much. Shelley was a man of great power as a poet, and could he only have had some notion of order, could you only have given him some plane whereon to stand, and look down upon his own mind, he would have succeeded. There are flashes of the true spirit to be met with in his works. Poor Shelley, it is a pity I often think that I never met with him. I could have done him good. He went to Keswick on purpose to see me and unfortunately fell in with Southey instead. There could have been nothing so unfortunate. Southey had no understanding for a toleration of such principles as Shelley's.

I should have laughed at his Atheism. I could have sympathised with him and shown him that I did so, and he would have felt that I did so. I could have shown him that I had once been in the same state myself, and I could have guided him through it. I have often bitterly regretted in my heart of hearts that I did never meet with Shelley.

*F.* It is time to be gone now I fear, Mr. Coleridge, and when I come up again I hope you will allow me to bring a volume of Keats with me.

*C.* I shall be most happy to see you for any night you like to come, and any day before 12 o'clock. Thursday nights are over now, but any night whether Thursday or not I shall be most happy to see you.

*F.* I must not allow you to come out into the passage, Sir. Good night. . . .

It was nearly a hundred years ago, yet we seem to see Mr. Frere stepping out into the night, his mind busy with the thoughts of the last hour.

Were the link boys running through the streets with flaring torches, and did the stately sedan chair carry home the gay beauty of those far-off days?

The picture arises which each reader can colour according to his fancy, yet the impression left as we close the manuscript volume with its marbled cover, is less of contrast than of unity. The matters that were of interest in the state of the country in 1830 are of interest in 1917, though in some cases we see the fulfilment of what was then hoped for.

To-day as the Colonies send their sons in their thousands to uphold the Motherland in her fight for Justice and Freedom, we know that our colonial attitude has been more than justified, and England is indeed proud of her Dominions.

The marbled volume closely written in a scholarly hand is once more placed on the shelf. The ink has grown pale with age, and the question arises—'Who to-day would find time to write down an evening's conversation, however interesting?' But another question is more insistent, as we compare the popular opinion expressed then about Keats, and other persons and subjects with the verdict of time:

Can a contemporary judgment be as good as a judgment formed when the person or matter is further from us? And this consideration brings the consoling thought that not all that may appear failure at the time is really failure. The age in which they live may be unworthy of its poets and prophets, yet none the less is their message Divine, and their voice will be heard at last.

But Mr. Coleridge and Mr. Frere have retired to rest, and we shall not again disturb them.

E. M. GREEN.

## 'THE WASTREL.'

THE black-faced sheep were scattering about the moss when Davia Moir stopped to shut the loaning gate. It was getting dark and the lonely fells rolled back, blurred and shadowy, to the east. In the foreground, peat-hags showed gashes of oily black among the ling, but some were filled with leaden water, ruffled by the bitter wind. Beneath him, in a hollow, his small, white farmstead stood amidst a few bare ash trees, and a dim gleam to the west indicated the sea. Moir was gaunt and a trifle bent by age and toil, though his eyes were keen. Sheep dealers called him a hard man, but took his word about the flocks he sold. As a matter of fact, he lived with stern frugality because his upland farm was poor and his younger son's folly had cost him dear.

By and by his old collie growled and he saw a line of indistinct figures crossing the moss. As one left the rest and came towards him he recognised a young Territorial sergeant, who was a seed merchant's clerk in peaceful times.

'Ye'll hae had a cauld day amang the fells,' he remarked. 'What were ye looking for?'

'I don't know,' the sergeant answered, smiling. 'The idea may have been to keep us fit, but we had orders to inquire about the old drove road and note anything suspicious. You'll have heard the tales about signal lights and mysterious cars that cross the moors after dark.'

'Idle clashes!'

'I'm not sure. The authorities seem to suspect that something's going on, and a strange motor launch *has* been seen off Barenan Sands; then the old north road comes down to the shore this way. I expect you know it?'

Moir nodded. The new road, which led through two towns, followed the water of Ewan down a neighbouring valley; the old one ran straight across the lonely fells.

'It's a green ro'd, but the maist o' it's no' so bad. I hae driven a young horse ower it in the dark, and it's no' verra steep until ye rin doon to Ewan glen.'

'Well,' said the sergeant, 'you may have a visit from Lieutenant Jardine and his motor scouts. They start on a patrol at eight o'clock, and, as they go round by Turnberry Moss, should get to

you about two hours later. There's a mystery about their job, but my notion is they're after the strange car. Anyhow I must catch the boys before they reach the big plantin'. They're a sporting lot and I don't trust them when there's game about.'

He turned away, and as Moir went down the loaning the hazy outline of a ruined kirk on the fellside caught his eye. His only daughter was buried in its wind-swept yard, and his two sons had left him. Tam, who was a well-doing lad, had joined the Borderers and been wounded in France; it was a month since they had news of him. Jimmy had disappeared a year ago, after Moir, who had crippled himself financially to save the lad from arrest, disowned him. The farmer suspected that his unemotional wife sometimes blamed him for harshness and grieved in secret for the prodigal. She had borne with Jimmy as she had never done with steady Tam.

When he entered the stone-floored, farm kitchen, Janet was sitting near the peat fire. Her hair was whiter than Moir's and her face deeply lined, but her plain dress was marked by austere taste, and she had a certain dignity. Man and wife were of the old, stern Calvinistic type that is now dying out. The room was large and draughty, and its precise neatness had a chilling effect. A rag-mat, which Janet had made before rheumatism stiffened her fingers, was the only concession to comfort, but shining china filled a rack above the plain oak press. The hearth-irons glittered, and a copper jelly pan flashed with an orange lustre in the glow of the peats. The herd had gone home to his cot-house and there was nobody else about. When Moir sat down Janet indicated a Glasgow newspaper.

'Townheid brought it ower—there's nae news,' she said.

Moir knew she had been studying the casualty list. Janet seldom showed her feelings and he could not tell whether she was conscious of relief or renewed suspense.

'We'll maybe get a letter soon,' he said. 'I met Ferguson on the moss and he telt me Mr. Jardine is likely to be here with his men.'

'Then I'll hae to offer them a bite to eat. There's nae loaf-bread and the scones are getting done; but Euphie's coming and she'll help me bake.'

Moir looked at her thoughtfully. Euphie Black was a neighbour's daughter and would have married Jimmy had things gone well.



'Does she ever hear frae him?'

Janet hesitated. 'I dinna ken; whiles I think— But I'll need to see if there's enough soor milk,' and she went off to the dairy, while Moir sat thinking of his wastrel son.

Jimmy was clever and it was by his mother's wish he went into the Glasgow merchant's office, but when he first came home for the Fair holidays, Moir owned that his wife was right. Jimmy looked well and more of a man, and his employer sent a good account of him. On subsequent visits Moir was less satisfied. The lad's showy clothes offended his sober taste and he did not like his city smartness. These, however, were not serious matters, and Janet showed no alarm. Moir thought he could trust her judgment, but had reflected since that her mother's partiality had blinded her. Then one Fair holiday Jimmy did not come home, and before the next arrived Moir was summoned to Glasgow by the boy's employer. He remembered the curious glances cast at him as he walked through the dingy office to the merchant's private room, from which he came out hiding a crushing load of shame behind a stern, set face. Half an hour later he returned with a bundle of British Linen notes and a letter of three bitter lines to be sent to the boy's lodgings. Janet acquiesced in his decision and never spoke of her son, but the lines on her face had deepened.

By and by Euphie came in and Moir went to the stable, where he found some harness that needed repair. He set about it and, as he was thorough in all he did, an hour passed before he was satisfied. When he came out it was raining hard, and on going back to the kitchen he found the baking finished and supper ready for the patrol. They are hospitable folk among the western fells and Lieutenant Jardine was a nephew of Moir's landlord's. The farmer sat down and watched Euphie knit. She was tall and had an attractive face, with firmly-lined features and steady grey eyes. As a rule, she was quiet, but her character was decided, and Moir sometimes wondered what had drawn her to his weak son.

Nobody spoke. A cold wind wailed about the house and the drips from a flooded roaring beneath the flagstone eaves splashed against a window-pane. After a time Janet moved abruptly as the door rattled and began to open. It had an awkward old-fashioned latch that few strangers were able to lift. The door, however, had opened and an indistinct figure stood, hesitating, in the porch. Janet got up and beckoned, but Moir sat still with his mouth set.

A young man came in, the water running from his light overcoat, and mud splashed about his leggings. He was breathless, but his face was rather pale than hot, and as he approached the lamp Moir saw there was blood upon his sleeve. The lad said nothing, but Janet went to meet him and put her arms round his neck. She felt him wince at her embrace, and, drawing back, saw, for the first time, his torn and reddened sleeve. Then with a low, pitiful cry she led him forward to the fire.

'Come away while I see til yere arm. How got ye hurt?'

Jimmy looked at his father, who made no sign, and afterwards at Euphie with a shamefaced air. She did not speak, but gave him a quiet, friendly smile that offended Moir. It was not for nothing he had disowned his son, and now the women had, without asking a question, re-instated him. Janet helped the lad to take off his wet coat, which he dropped upon the floor, and then, after telling Euphie to bring hot water, took him away.

Euphie sat down silently when she returned, and Moir, who disliked untidiness, picked up the coat and, after washing the sleeve, hung it near the door. By and by mother and son came back, but Jimmy now wore a different suit that Moir remembered. It was an old one he had once left behind, but Janet had cleaned and pressed it and kept it for three years. Moir began to realise that he did not know his wife yet. He turned to Euphie when Jimmy sat down without looking at him.

'It's getting late and ye'd be better at home,' he said.

'No,' she answered with firm quietness. 'I was promised to Jimmy and I'll hear what he has to tell.'

Moir made a sign of acquiescence and gave his son a stern commanding look.

'What brought ye here?' he asked.

'I was hurt and had nowhere else to go,' Jimmy answered in a strained voice. 'I only want shelter for a few hours; not to stay.'

'How did ye get hurt?'

'A Territorial stopped me at a gate. He tore my arm with his bayonet, but the cut's not very deep.'

'Ye were hard put to it when ye tried to pass the soldier,' Moir remarked.

'I had to pass him. It was very dark, and there was a hole in the dyke not far off. I thought the others were after me.'

'What ithers? But ye'll go back and begin at the first o' it.'

I sent ye the price o' a third-class passage to Canada. Why did ye not go ?'

'The money was stolen.'

'Ay,' said Moir grimly, 'I will not ask ye where! Gang on.'

Jimmy hesitated, but pulled himself together and told his tale. Soon after he was left penniless and disgraced, he found a friend in Fritz, one of the boon companions who had brought about his downfall. Fritz lent him a few small sums and by and by took him to see another man, who sent him to Leith. Jimmy did not mention what he did there, but stated awkwardly that he had got in too deep to draw back when he found out what his employer's business really was. Then he stopped and said his arm was hurting him. The women looked puzzled, but Moir's face set like flint.

'So ye stayed and helped the Gairman spies!'

There was silence for a few moments. Euphie's face was flushed and she fixed her eyes on the fire, while Janet nervously moved her hands.

'Weel,' Moir resumed, 'ye can noo tell us how ye cam' to visit this pairt o' the country.'

Jimmy roused himself with an effort and went on in a low voice : 'I came with them in the car now and then, by the old green road ; you see I knew the way. They met another party at the waterfoot by Barennan Sands.'

'Just that!' Moir said grimly. 'I ken why ye went to Leith. There was news to be picked up about the navy yards at Rosyth. What else did ye bring?'

'Sometimes a man I didn't know, and once a load of small iron drums. I can't say what was inside. They didn't tell me much.'

Moir pondered. He imagined that the drums held something that was needed by enemy submarines ; but Jimmy's frankness puzzled him. He did not think it was contrition, since he had no faith in his son. The lad seemed to have told the truth because he was afraid.

'Where did ye leave yere foreign friends?' he asked.

'Where the road turns off to the old place of Whiterigg ; they stopped there now and then, and there's a gate, you mind. I got down to open it and they drove off.'

'Why?' Moir demanded, and the fear was plainer in Jimmy's eyes.

'I think their work must be nearly done and they meant to get

rid of me. After all, I don't know very much, and they'd reckon I'd be afraid to tell what I had found out.'

Moir began to understand. The old house at Whiterigg had lately been left in charge of a caretaker who obviously belonged to the gang, which indicated that the latter was well organised. The lad was perhaps in some danger from them.

'But what for did they gang to the Whiterigg?'

'To wait for high-tide, I expect. They'd run down to the water-foot when a boat could come up the gut through the sands.'

'That would be the way o' it, nae doot; but I dinna ken yet why ye cam' hame.'

'Where else would he gang for safety?' Janet asked in a pitiful tone.

'Ony place but here! It's to my sorrow he's a son o' mine. But let him speak.'

Jimmy's narrative was not very lucid, but it appeared that he had been seized by a kind of panic when left in the road. He had very little money, something suspicious had happened at the last stopping place, and he thought his friends had betrayed him to the police, or might send somebody after him in the dark. He lost his nerve when he found the soldier in his way, and after getting past the man ran blindly across the moor towards home. When he finished Moir glanced at the tall oak clock.

'Ye have aboot an 'oor, and then Mr. Jardine will be here with his motor scouts,' he said, and taking his gun from a rack went out.

It was raining hard and very dark, but he made his way across the moss to where the old road ran down to Ewan Water, and stopped a short distance from the bank. A weak thorn hedge grew beside it, but Moir could see the pale glimmer of the water two or three yards below and hear the gurgle of the current, which swirled round a deep elbow-pool. A pair of stone gateposts stood close by, but the gate had been removed to allow the cattle fresh pasture, and Moir, who knew where it was, brought it back. He hung it to the post and fastened it firmly to the other with some wire from a fence. He had already lighted a lantern, and now examined his work. The gate was old, but looked pretty strong; some force would be required to break it down. Then he went up the steep hill away from the water and stopped at an opening in a dyke at the top. There was no gate here, and after hiding his lantern he sheltered behind the wall in a dangerous mood.

David Moir was a true descendant of the old Westland Whigs ; sternly just and ready to suffer for his principles, he could make no allowance for a different point of view, and was subject to fits of cold anger which, while generally righteous, was tinged with fanaticism. His son's treachery filled him with horror, but he was calm enough to see that the weak lad had been the victim of the men who used him. Well, he meant to settle the black account with them !

It was bitterly cold and he was getting wet, but his watchfulness did not relax. The growl of Ewan Water, brawling among the stones, rose from the valley and the wind whistled eerily through the chinks in the dyke. For a time he heard nothing else, and then a faint throbbing began and grew louder. A big car, without lights, was travelling dangerously fast along the fellside, and as it came near Moir stood in the gateway holding up his lantern. He heard a warning shout and a rattle of stones as the locked wheels skidded, and the half-seen car stopped a few yards off. Moir turned the light upon the two men in it.

'Which o' ye is Fritz ?' he asked.

They looked surprised, but one said 'You want to know too much. Why have you stopped us ?'

'My name is Moir. I want a word with ye.'

He put the lantern on the dyke and the light glimmered on the barrel of his gun. It was his duty to hand the men to the patrol, but if this was impossible, so much the worse for them. They had made his son a traitor to his country by taking advantage of his need, and Moir suspected that Fritz had first made him a thief.

'You're the young fool's father, but we can't waste time on you,' said one. 'Drop that gun and let us pass !'

'Get doon !' said Moir, who did not move.

'Out of the way, or we'll drive over you !' the other cried.

The car rolled forward and Moir sprang back, hesitated as it ran past, and lowered his gun.

'Drive tae h—, where ye belang !' he said, as the car lurched furiously down the hill.

Then he stood and listened. A sharp-pitched throbbing now rose from the valley, through which the high-road wound on the other side of the water. It sounded like a motor bicycle, and Moir understood the impatience of the men he had stopped. Jardine's scouts had got upon their track, but the chances were against the fugitives reaching the bridge where the roads joined. He waited

with his face fixed like stone until he heard a heavy crash in the dark below. Then he picked up his lantern and ran down the hill.

When he reached the bottom everything was quiet except for the roar of Ewan Water and the hum of the approaching bicycle, but pieces of the broken gate lay about the road. Moir raised the lantern and saw a track deeply ploughed through the grass and stones, in front of which the hedge was smashed. Looking down through the gap, he distinguished something in the water. It looked like the wheel of an upset car, but he could not see it well, because the torrent foamed in an angry swirl across what lay below. If the men had not jumped before the plunge, it was too late for help.

A minute later, the motor bicycle rattled across the bridge a short distance off and sped towards him. It slowed and Lieutenant Jardine got down.

'Have you seen a car, David?' he asked.

'I hae,' said Moir. 'Let yere machine stand. She's in the pool.'

The young man followed him to the broken hedge and looked down. 'What about the men?'

'Maybe they jumpit aff. If no', they're under her.'

Lieutenant Jardine, who had seen no active service yet, caught his breath with a short gasp.

'How long will it take to get her out?'

'An 'oor or two and half a dizen men; but ye'll need to send doon the bay for tackle.'

'I'm afraid that's so,' agreed Jardine, who had got a shock. 'However, we'd better see if they've escaped and are somewhere about.'

They searched the hedge and bank on both sides, but found nobody, nor any footprints leading from the water. Then Jardine followed Moir to where the shattered gate lay about the road.

'Well,' he said slowly, 'it was justifiable; you warned them to stop. A herd told us about the car and I started at once. After a time I thought I heard her in front, but suppose I missed her where the old road branches off. But some of the boys will have reached your farm, and we must send for tackle.'

He left the bicycle and resumed as they walked up the hill: 'When we stopped at the Mains farm, I sent out flankers to search the by-roads ahead, by way of training the men. One reported

that he challenged and wounded a suspicious stranger who refused to stop and managed to get away. I sent him and another on to search the country and report to me at your house. It looks as if the fellow had something to do with the car.'

'Ay,' Moir answered quietly, 'it looks like that.'

He said nothing further, for his mind was occupied. His duty was to give up his son, but he thought of the lad's mother and shrank. Still, he would not shield him; if Jimmy was in the house when they reached it, justice must take its course. His heart beat fast as he opened the door and then he drew a breath of relief. A few men in wet khaki sat by the hearth, talking to Janet and Euphie, but Jimmy was not there. Moir thought his wife's look was somewhat strained, but when she turned towards him the girl's glance was steady. The men got up as Jardine came forward, and he sent one off to obtain appliances for dragging out the car.

'Did you get on the track of the fellow you wounded?' he asked another.

'No, sir. I took the moss road without a light, but the machine went ower a big stone and threw me off. The front wheel was buckled, so I left her behind a peat-stack and cam' on, without seeing anybody.'

'Has Watson been in to report?'

'Yes, sir. He kept the high-road, by the Knowe and Townhead, but they'd seen nothing o' our man, and there was nobody on the road as far as where the drove track runs in. Watson's gone back to watch by the bothy near the brig.'

'Then it looks as if the fellow was hiding between where he was seen and here, but it's unlikely that a wounded man would lie out on the moors on a night like this,' Jardine said thoughtfully, and turned to Janet. 'He might have crept into your byre or barn. Did you hear anything suspicious?'

Moir was sensible of keen tension as he glanced at his wife, but her face was calm.

'He couldna have creepit into ony place withoot Rab, the collie, hearing him.'

'The dog was outside and he'll hardly let a stranger set foot in the loaning,' Euphie supported her.

'That's true, sir,' one of the men remarked. 'He cam' oot to meet us and it was no' that easy getting by.'

Jardine hesitated, and Moir felt his heart beat as he glanced at Jimmy's coat, which hung in plain view with the wet sleeve

suspiciously torn Nobody, however, seemed to have noticed it, and when Janet urged them Jardine and his scouts sat down to supper. When the meal was over and they were going, Moir said :

'I'll hae to drive a son o' mine, frae Glasgow, doon the water to catch the early train.'

'Then Jimmy's back?' said Jardine, who knew something about the lad.

'He got hame late and needit a few 'oors' sleep before starting again,' Janet explained.

'Very well,' said Jardine, who took out a fountain pen and writing on a leaf from his pocket-book gave it Moir. 'My men won't interfere with you, but as I must warn the police and Territorials, you'd better take this pass.'

He went out and Moir turned to Janet. 'Where hae ye hidden him?'

'In the barn,' said Janet, with signs of strain.

'Then ye'll baith come and hear what I say til him,' Moir replied, and lighted his lantern.

A minute or two later, Jimmy got up from the straw among which he was lying, as Moir flashed the light into his face.

'Have they gone?' he asked anxiously.

'Ay,' said Moir; 'but ye're no' safe yet. If yere Gairman friends arena' drooned, they'll be in jail the morn.'

'Then they'll think I gave them away.'

'It's verra probable,' Moir agreed. 'For a' that, ye'll be in Carlisle by then to enlist in the Borderers.'

There was silence for a moment, and then Euphie said 'It's the only way, Jimmy. It's your chance of winning back.'

'He'll tak' it,' Moir remarked grimly. 'If he doesna, he leaves here in chairge o' the polis.' Then he turned to the lad. 'I'll waken ye when it's time. Dinna' keep yere mither lang.'

He went back to the kitchen, and by and by Janet came in alone. Her eyes were wet, but she put her hand on Moir's shoulder.

I'm thinking ye found the right way, David,' she said. 'He'll gang.'

HAROLD BINDLOSS.



## ON NIGHT DUTY.

It was a large base hospital in a large and dirty town. South Country men grew frank with disgust when they saw the pall of fog that hung for a fortnight outside the windows, yet things were little better when the fog cleared and the great buildings stood stark in their black ugliness.

Yet the night nurses would linger at the corridor windows on their way down to the dining-room. There was the glamour of night on the big city, mighty buildings silhouetted against a sky of dark luminous blue, towers that divided the stars, and far below in the street the ruby and topaz lights of the road-menders, with the glowing brazier of the night-watchman. And then dawn came with its chilling wind and its grey cheerless light that discovered, without love or pity, the sordid things of town—the dirty canal, the barges, the heaps of timber, the ugly money-making warehouses and factories. All this we saw—a world pallid and cold, with none of the genial glow of noontide.

The hospital never failed to charm me at night. Its interior aspect had a beauty of dim wards and red subdued lights over the 'dug-outs,' where a sister or nurse sat in charge. The long rows of white beds disappeared into the darkness, and the men in them had that pathos—unreal in some cases—of the sleeping and the helpless. At night they were all children—children who talked pitifully in their sleep of Germans and trenches and ghastly things beyond our ken. They called sometimes a woman's name and professed next morning a guileless ignorance of her existence.

It was a hushed and mysterious world, where one whispered and walked stealthily, and yet where much was told and where life seemed simpler and more genuine than by day when the little tin gods were all awake. At that time I saw most of the mental ward, the most pathetic place in any hospital. Sleep was an unwilling visitor there, except to the orderlies, who, in the intervals of card-playing and button-cleaning, relapsed into the attitudes of the seven sleepers.

Night after night old Dad Hobson would stay awake till two or three o'clock, without complaint or murmur. Any man a little past his prime was called 'dad' or described as 'old' in this land of youth. And in sober fact Dad Hobson had seven children. He

had been a miner before he made the great sacrifice that had left him maimed and insane. He was always courteous, always considerate. Even on those days when he refused to eat it was with a polite 'I'm sorry not to oblige you, nurse.' He believed himself guilty of some crime—he had murdered Sir Ian Hamilton—and in trivial ways too he held himself responsible for any disturbance in that much-disturbed ward. At times he was so much better that we hoped he was regaining his wits, but always there would come a relapse and his face would be downcast, and 'I'm puzzled somehow, something's wrong. I can't get things clear in my mind,' would be the explanation. He had odd delusions too, for a doctor clad in a dressing-gown provoked his question to an orderly, 'Is that Lord Nelson?'

It was a strange little party altogether in that ward. Hobson would lie there by the hour, dimly annoyed by Jimmy in the bed opposite. Jimmy had nearly died of wounds and later of pneumonia, but he had rallied, only to reach a state of discomfort and nervous temper that was liable to fiendish explosions. For the most part he was a lovable boy, with a curious charm of his own. Sleepless, like Hobson, till the small hours, he played cards with the orderlies. When things pleased him Jimmy was an angel, but at other times he was a fiend. A certain soldier, a clarionet player once in the Queen's Hall orchestra, came to the ward. He was suffering from insomnia and melancholia. Jimmy's drawling voice and his card-playing and, perhaps, his popularity annoyed the clarionet player, and they quarrelled. Jimmy merely remarked:

'I'll do for him—see if I don't.'

The clarionet player was removed to the next ward, separated from the other only by a glass and wood partition.

'He shan't sleep to-night if I don't,' said Jimmy, and he took careful aim at the glass partition with his tin mug. He hit the woodwork and missed his enemy's head in the next ward, so he fell into heavy-browed sulking, with the threat 'I'll do for myself.' This is often a mere threat, but he did make an endeavour by biting up a blue-lead pencil—a tedious and uncertain form of suicide. The pencil was taken away and, blue-lipped and weary, like a naughty child he fell asleep. Poor Jimmy! He went to a Scottish asylum where many of our patients were sent for further treatment. I heard lately that he was really better and likely to be discharged.

One of the beds was occupied by Andy—Andy of the picturesque speech and uncertain behaviour. He came in raging under the

effects of alcoholic poisoning. Such cases always spent a night or so in the X-ray room with a special orderly. I saw him that night, a flushed unhappy-looking boy, who was sane enough to speak politely and to say 'Nurrse,' with the delightful roll that our Jocks put into it. Later Andy came down to the ward, and was duly established in a corner bed. Here we got to know him for the loquacious rattle-pate he was. By day he was sane enough, but at night he was subject to awful dreams and fits of horror, which caused him to roll out of bed with an alarming bump. One night he thought the German prisoners were coming to murder him—two inoffensive boys with very little strength between them; another time I found him a hump at the foot of his bed.

'Come out, Andy,' I said.

'I'll kill you if I do, Nurrse; I've killed all my chums.'

But he crawled out flushed and weary. His face was coarsened and weakened by too much drinking, but it was a pleasant boyish face. He had, too, that quick imagination which gives vivid charm even to stories which tax belief. Andy told us wonderful stories of his doings at Loos and elsewhere. He had been a bomb-thrower, one of three survivors from a party of one hundred and sixty. The story was declared to be untrue by someone who knew him, but Andy could spin a yarn to keep Sister B., the orderlies, and myself in amazement round his bed. His own history, too, was a chequered, strange record. He had run away from home at ten years old and had joined a circus. He had been with Barnum, Wombwell, 'Lord' George Sanger, and travelled the kingdom from town to town. At fifteen he had enlisted in the Cameron Highlanders, deserted after a time, changed his name and joined the Gordons. He had been a champion boxer for—I forget the place. He had been everywhere and done most things, and was—poor Andy!—a nervous, dyspeptic wreck at twenty-four. Yet he had 'a way with him'—a way that made us fond and disapproving at the same time.

The night before I started for a holiday, the Sister in charge had given orders that Andy was to wear pyjamas. He preferred a night-shirt. The point made a dispute. To humour him I said:

'Andy, you'll spoil my holiday if you don't put on those trousers. I couldn't be happy if I thought you hadn't got them on.'

Andy was on the far side of a screen. There was silence, then a rustling, then Andy's voice: 'Nurrse . . . I've got on they trrousers. I wouldn't spoil your holiday, you ken.'

The next morning I saw the last of him. He was asleep. I put my hand on his head and said 'Tell him I left him my blessing.' It was carelessly said; I thought I should find him when I came back, but I have never seen him since.

They sent an armed escort from Aberdeen to bring Andy to a court-martial. Rumour went round the hospital that he had deserted in France, and would be sent back to France to be shot. How often in his sleep Andy had muttered 'I won't go back; I won't . . . I won't . . . I'll do for myself first. They shan't court-martial me . . . they shan't.' Now it was explained.

When Andy heard that the escort had come for him he was quiet enough. He promised to pack his kit-bag and go quietly. However, he went off to the bathroom and was found trying to hang himself. They brought him back to the ward. He snatched a razor from his locker and tried to cut his throat. I don't think he tried very hard—Andy was more dramatic than thorough. The escort went back to Aberdeen, for Andy was now in one of his raving, struggling attacks, and obviously unfit for the journey. When he was better he was handcuffed, his hands behind him, and so left for more hours than one likes to think of. I heard the story when I came back, and there was a chorus of pity on his behalf.

'I could have cried when I saw him handcuffed, marching down the corridor,' said a nurse. And the orderlies, even one whom he had kicked in the stomach, were pitiful for him—orderlies are a compassionate race.

The escort returned and Andy, strapped to a stretcher, was taken away to Aberdeen. We discussed his fate for many days, always with the decision 'They *couldn't* shoot him.' Then rumour said he would get five years in a military prison, but meanwhile Andy sent us letters, written in lurid-looking red ink. He wrote from a Scottish hospital, and wrote gaily, jauntily, with no mention of prisons, desertion, or court-martial. His pride must have suffered horribly, for he had made of himself so gallant a figure, poor boastful Andy. He loved to write in the dialect that he talked, though he could, if he chose, send a fine English letter. Speaking of his very delicate digestion he says 'I had a wee bit jelly for dinner; it slipped itself doon and just slipped back again. It doesna matter, what they gie me, it comes back. I try hard to keep it, but I canna.' A few letters came from the large Scottish asylum where many of our mental cases were sent. They were always written in red ink, and

concluded with a liberal supply of kisses (a matter of politeness this with many soldiers). Then the letters stopped, and none of us has heard anything more of poor Andy. He belonged, I fear, to the flotsam of life, and the waves washed him here and there.

A sad case was poor old Snakes. He was called Snakes because when he recovered enough to speak, he told us that he had swallowed a lot of snakes—no wonder that he never smiled. One morning I put the conventional question, 'Are you better to-day?' and received the sad answer, 'How can I be better, I'm full of buttons.' Another time he was full of watches that ticked in his ears, and again he had swallowed a tramcar—poor, melancholy old Snakes!

But the dearest of all our sad little family was certainly Alfred; Alfred Morgan of a Welsh regiment, never mind which. He was brought in from a military prison—sentenced for desertion, a case for a certain paper that champions the injured Tommy. Poor Alfred, with his wits all gone to pieces, his head and limbs shaking, his face working, seemed to us a living protest against any judgment but a doctor's. I could hardly bear to see him, so hopelessly insane did he look. Death would have been far better than this doddering idiocy. The other men, sanest of the sane compared with him, tried to pet him and to coax answers out of him, but his mind, as Sister B. remarked, was a jig-saw puzzle gone to pieces. The pieces seemed to have no cohesion. He talked ramblingly of Bob his horse, of a dog, a canal, some medals, a picture, of Ada and the pigeons. He fancied the floor was the canal, and fished there with groping hands. Sometimes a word or a place-name would seem to rouse him, and he'd tell us the names of streets or of people: at other times he would shake his head and gaze vacantly round him, or look with that worried, bewildered look that made one's heart ache.

It was Sister B. who did the most to fit the puzzle together. Every night she would sit by his bed and question him, bringing him back to the point time after time. We were filling in more of the puzzle every night. Alfred had lived in Birmingham, had been on a canal barge, had taken coal to some place; he had won medals, had a mother, and there was a picture that he remembered. Policemen excited him to frenzy, and when he saw one of the Force he would fling apples or slippers, or any handy missile, through the window. He could play cards too. There was a gradual mental development—the most fascinating thing one can watch.

But it was slow, and Alfred seemed like a rudderless boat at sea till he met Jock.

Jock is a story all to himself. Suffice it to say of him that his vocation was to be a guardian angel. Every Scottish soldier is Jock in hospital, and perhaps other hospitals have found Jocks like ours—always unselfish, cheery, uncomplaining, infinitely pitiful to every trouble but their own; still I believe our Jock would outshine theirs.

Sister B. decided to bring Alfred on a visit to Jock's ward. I must say that the experiment was painful. A surgical ward is a very cheerful place, and poor Alfred, shaky, bewildered, pitiful, was a figure to darken the sun at that time. But Sister B. was a nurse of brave experiments. She dared and succeeded; she was resourceful and passionately interested in her patients. So she brought Alfred to this sane and happy ward, and sat him down by Jock's bed. Jock had been wounded at Loos in September, 1915, and had remained in bed for eight months with the occasional variation of an operation and brief respites when he was up and in a wheeled chair.

Among many pathetic things I had seen, none seemed to me more pathetic than the sight of those two war-shattered boys together. Alfred, nearly speechless, his poor wits all astray, tried to make himself lucid, while Jock, with infinite pity on his face, tried to understand and to help. The one looked like an angel of mercy, the other like some poor soul in search of peace. I don't know how they talked, but somehow they made friends. Alfred was utterly unwilling to go back to his own ward, though he returned laden with cigarettes and apples. From that day the friendship grew. Every day Alfred visited Jock, and Jock, when he could get into a chair, returned the call. Somehow they talked. Jock has infinite patience and tact; he has graduated in the college of suffering and has learnt the whole art of compassion. He found out that Alfred knew most things knowable about football, that he was, in fact, a 'real little sport.'

The ward adopted Alfred as a sort of mascot; he might do and have what he liked. He was just an unhappy child, humoured at all points.

Then arrived someone who solved the riddle of the medals and the picture of which Alfred talked so much. This man had seen a picture of Alfred boxing another celebrated pugilist. Alfred was a well-known character in the Ring—he had won his nine

medals in various contests. To name a boxer was to set Alfred blazing with excitement and fearful efforts to stammer out some story of an encounter in which he had taken part.

We learnt more of Ada at last. Ada was 'his girl,' and he had left the pigeons in her keeping.

'Poor Ada,' I said one day to Jock, 'what would she say if she saw Alfred?'

'Alfred writes to her,' Jock replied solemnly. 'At least I write for him.'

'But,' I objected, 'Ada may fall in love with your letters—it's not fair to her.'

'Oh! I put "Jock helped to write this" at the top,' he explained earnestly.

What Ada thought of these dual letters I cannot say. I suppose she minds Alfred's pigeons and hopes on. As for Alfred, I think his real love was for Jock. When he was restive and talked of going away we could soothe him by saying that he surely would not leave Jock alone. Everything he had he brought to his idol to share it with him. He made himself bath-chairman, and the two would go off to the one window that commanded an amusing street view. Together they hung out in perfect amity and understood each other in silence, for Alfred could barely get the words for even a short sentence. Alfred was the sheep-dog, Jock the shepherd.

It was understood that if one was asked to tea anywhere the other must go too. With Jock Alfred was known to be 'all right.' So things went happily until the inevitable parting. Jock was sent to a Red Cross hospital almost at a moment's notice. Alfred was inconsolable; he wandered, red-eyed, forlorn, piteously incoherent, from ward to ward, searching vaguely and vainly for his chum. He shed bitter childlike tears, while Jock, for his part, suffered for Alfred's trouble and his own. Such is the pathos of hospital. Later, Alfred was sent to the Scottish hospital of which mention has been made. He and Jock write to each other—perhaps some day they will meet.

As for Jock, I think a star laughed when he was born—though he can suffer to the full capacity of a Celtic nature. Good angels have him in their keeping and save him—only Heaven knows how—from being spoiled.

I was present when the sergeant of the guard met Jock being wheeled down the corridor. He interrupted the triumphal progress with six foot of stalwart manhood.



'That,' said he, 'is by his looks the happiest boy in this hospital. I've never seen him sad, I've never heard him grumble. He's the boy for my money—he's a good boy, a great boy! We need more like him, we do!'

This was embarrassing, but Jock took it quietly and politely. More touching was the devotion of the corporal of the guard. 'I had a son just like him, killed at Suvla Bay,' he explained.

But Jock was of those who have fairy godmothers. If you imagine Bonnie Prince Charlie before his heroism was tarnished, you have Jock; or if you imagine Malcolm, Marquis of Lossie, in a lighter vein, you have him; and if you picture young Loch-invar, or Jock of Hazeldean, or some other hero of Scottish ballad, you see our Jock.

When first we saw him—it was an October day soon after the battle of Loos—he looked haggard, unshaven, and quite unlike the boy of a later date. He had a shockingly wounded knee, and was running a temperature. His dressing was a daily torture. We knew it was agony, because he whistled and sang the whole time and talked the most fascinating nonsense in beautiful Doric—only he gripped the head rail of his bed with an iron 'grup,' as he would have called it, and looked within measurable distance of fainting.

Movement was dreadful to him, but he had journeys to the X-ray room and to the operating theatre. Even in semi-consciousness he was true to himself—true to the self which was always pushed out of sight. I remember his sitting up just after an operation, and casting a distracted look round the ward.

'Are the troops safe and in their places?' he asked wildly. Reassured, he asked again 'Is Paddy all right?' Paddy was our orderly and a devoted friend of Jock's. Then with a sigh of relief he lay down.

The following day he had an extension put on the injured leg. If you can imagine what it is to have a terribly injured knee, then to have it cut about, and finally to have it held up for half an hour or more while the extension is put on, you have just a faint idea what Jock suffered in grim silence. He was in the torture chamber but he never winced—only the youth went out of his face and a sort of grey old age seemed to come upon him.

I said to him later: 'You've had an awful time of it to-day, Jock.'

He was still faint with pain, but he murmured: 'No so bad. Oh! it was no so bad at all, Nurse.'



To these bad times belonged his polite requests, 'Will you pull my leg a wee?' and 'Will you sort my leg?'—a phrase which always delighted me; but, as a Scottish captain asked seriously when I had quoted this latter request, 'What else *could* he have said?'

Often in those bad winter days when Jock's temperature rose with such alarming bounds, I used to wonder if he would ever see Scotland again. There was the dreadful bugbear septicæmia, and there was always the likelihood that he would have to lose his leg. But he had a good angel in Sister B. No one could 'sort his leg' as she could, no one could hurt him so little or so quickly as she, and no one could put in what he called 'they tubes' as she could—those deadly tubes that seemed to go by winding alleys and narrow desperate ways under his patella and right through the back of his knee. I think she staked her soul (and no one gave more life and soul to her patients than she did) that Jock should keep his leg. She was the first who dared to get him into a wheel chair; she taught him to walk again; she comforted him and helped him to face the long months, for even Jock had his dark days—more of them than he let us know. He used at these times to read Burns with devotion, and he told me that 'Desolation' and 'Man is made to Mourn' were his favourite poems, and exactly expressive of his feelings.

'One gets a wee bit fed up at times,' he confessed, 'thinking one'll never play football again.'

Football had been his joy, and somehow I think he went out to the war as to football on a larger scale. Quite casually he described the Highlanders' charge at Loos. He was out of it very soon himself, but even at that moment his thoughts had all been outside himself.

'I prayed then as I never prayed before,' he remarked.

'For the stretcher-bearers to come to you,' suggested a listener.

'No, of course not'—this with surprise—'I prayed for the boys. Man! it was grand to see the kilts go by.'

Casually he told of his effort to save one of his officers who was severely wounded. But both of them were unable to move and they lay on the field for twenty-four hours.

Patrick MacGill in his terrible description of Loos tells how the Jocks were scattered, dead and wounded, on the battlefield, their bare knees gleaming in the pale morning light. But for many there was no return.

However, this is a happy story. I firmly believe that Jock is the true fairy-tale hero who marries the princess and lives happily ever afterwards, even as he deserves. But he will always suffer for the suffering of others. He confided to me with shame that certain books brought him inexplicable sensations rather like wanting to cry. 'It's a sort of soft spot in my wooden heart,' he explained. All alone in the ward he would solace himself by singing Burns's songs—with tears in his eyes. He accounted for them by saying the light had dazzled him.

To the sorrows of the ward he gave all his heart. One of the ineffaceable memories of hospital is the morning when Patterson died. Patterson, a man of very different temperament, had loved Jock too and had, during his long-drawn weeks of dying, found comfort, I believe, in the atmosphere of cheeriness that emanated from Jock's bed, when he could not move. They were two of the worst cases, and they could only exchange greetings by shouting across the ward.

On this morning there was a terrible silence. No one had the heart for song or gramophone. Patterson's pain was too apparent; the coming end of it held the men in a hushed suspense. Then suddenly Patterson made an effort and called to Jock, 'How are you, Jock?' And Jock, white with sympathy, called back, 'Champion! What way are you, Patterson?' The pity of it . . .

But Jock's story is only a quarter written. Its chapters have been fine reading for those who have had the luck to read them so far, but I believe there will be finer chapters yet.

Often I said to myself in fear for him, 'Whom the orderlies love die young'—for the orderlies adored Jock, but the adapted proverb did not come true, for he is walking about now and 'enjoying life fine to make up for all the months in bed—not that I suffered so much at all, Nurse.'

This is a happy story, but we saw sad ones.

Death is just an incident in hospital life. Alas! one sometimes forgets that it is all-important to the dying. A household seems to hold its breath when somebody dies; a ward continues its automatic routine. There is pity—much of it—but it is a common-sense pity, that accepts death as just an inevitable happening to be finished and then forgotten.

I remember so well the night when old Sergeant Meadows died. He had only been in the ward for three days, so that his

personality had had no chance to impress us. All the men settled down to sleep except Harman, who had suddenly gone mad. He shrieked if anyone went near him, tried to push us away, then to blow us away. A hypodermic of morphia seemed to produce little effect on him except that he was a shade quieter; he did not sleep but remained sitting up in bed, watchful and terribly alert.

Meanwhile the poor old sergeant was dying. Nothing could be done for him. Morton, the orderly, always pitiful, came and looked at him.

'Well,' he said philosophically, 'this is a queer night we're having. A man in the other ward tells me 'e's been seein' rabbits. It's too much! I just says "This must stop. There's too many seein' rabbits to-night." I knew a man what saw red, white, and blue rats—had 'em proper, 'e did.'

Morton sighed. He was a gentle soul, capable of infinite tenderness and patience, as many orderlies are. They are, one sometimes thinks, gentler than women, less conventional, and stereotyped in their kindness.

'Poor man!' Morton murmured. 'A good old soul. It's queer how little one thinks of it. When the young ones die it comes worse on one.'

A few minutes afterwards the sergeant was dead. Unused to death, I hardly realised it. At once preparations were made for his laying-out and subsequent removal. There is a routine about death as about birth. The immensity of the spiritual change is obscured by the methodical functions of material life. Yet death is the supreme adventure.

It seemed sad for the old man to have met this great adventure among strangers, to go forth silently, without tears or prayers or love from us who watched. Yet I think this quiet, unemotional passing is dignified. Very soon afterwards the orderlies came with a stretcher and the Union Jack for pall, and so the old man left us. His body went to the mortuary, and his soul—surely, 'his soul goes marching on.' And all the time the other men slept like weary children. Only Harman sat up, still awake and watchful in his terrible nervous tension.

Hospital is a world to itself, and those outside know little of it; so one often thought, when visitors expressed surprise that we all seemed cheerful. Of course we were not all cheerful or always cheerful. The cheerfulness of the Tommy is a composite thing. In part it is due to his youth and his character, and is in that sense

natural; but it is in part his religion—in some cases his only real religion. To be cheerful is 'to play the game'—that wonderful, indefinite, sacred 'Game' of the English, which demands the utmost of body and soul. Just sometimes a man who had become one's friend would admit the bitterness of his heart, would say that he was 'fed-up,' only to laugh it off and ask the eternal riddle, 'Where's the good of grumbling?' So we were really cheerful at most times, but I always thought the most cheerful time the hours between five o'clock and eight in the morning.

In a surgical ward dressings are begun between four and five o'clock, but the general stir is not till five. It was customary in many wards for Sisters and nurses to provide an early cup of tea for the patients, and the Jocks and a few others had porridge. This was the time of sing-songs. Torrey-Alexander hymns were sandwiched between such cheerful ditties as 'What's the Matter with Father?' and 'Hulloa! hulloa! Who's your Lady Friend?' Then of course we had the inevitable 'Little Grey Home,' and as surely 'Michigan' and 'When Irish Eyes are Smiling.' Meantime the bed patients were washing and beds were being made. The men who could get up were the last to move. If the delay became insupportable, their more active companions would tip them on to the floor—I have seen the whole bedstead turned upside down. The men themselves were great bed-makers, and one could nearly always find someone to give a hand in quite professional style.

Yes, things were cheerful in the mornings, and informal too. If work was done early the Sisters and nurses had time for a private and hasty cup of coffee in one of the dug-outs, and there was time, too, for talk with the men, and always we had a cheery visit from the 'night super,' Sister L. As for the war—the very reason of our present estate—it was the subject least discussed. Sometimes one almost forgot that there was a war. Every private house worries and thinks more of war than any hospital ward does—or it *seems* so. There might be dark thoughts under all the trivial discussions, the little jokes, the conventional badinage that we carried on, but they did not appear.

At eight o'clock the day staff arrived and our night was over—always, I was a little sorry. There is a vague but eternal feud between 'the day people and the night people.' The night staff is 'the cat' for the day staff. Whatever is missing—spoons, mugs, dressings, instruments—the solution of the mystery is clear—'it's those night people.' The day orderlies lay on the souls of the

night nurses dozens of spoons, forks, and knives. The day Sister thinks the night Sister either too easy or too harsh with her patients. It is just one of the inevitables of life.

I shall think often now of those whose watch is by night—not with any pity, for it is a strange, quiet life, but a happy one. I only knew it in a rather dead season, not in the busy time when trains were coming in and patients arriving nightly. There the night staff has small time for reflection. The hours pass in a whirl of bed-baths, dressings, and settlement. But it was not my good fortune to know such nights.

‘HALLOW-E’EN.’

### THE ROMANCE OF THE BARBER.

'WE'RE much too early, John. I said we should be. There's not a sign of a bass.' I lifted the sail and peered across the shining water.

'Nought's lost by bein' in time, sir,' said the old boatman. 'They'll sport with the flood. And there be another boat over there. Mr. Harris and his little boy.'

'He never misses these early tides,' I said. 'I suppose they just suit him. He can have his sport before he has to open his shop. He's pretty venturesome to come out here by himself. But I suppose he knows the Bar as well as you sailor-men?'

'He didn't at one time, sir. He'd as soon have set himself down on a hot stove as come out here.' And old John's deep-set blue eyes twinkled. 'What changed him? Well, it all had to do with his courtship, and getting of his wife. There's a bit o' ebb to run, and whilst I fixes they minnows I'll tell 'ee about it. Just let me get at that locker fust. Thank 'ee, sir. That's it.

'Well, except that the good Lord had ordained his place in the world, and so he were bound to fill it, I dunno but what the most curious thing weren't Mr. Harris coming to Appledore village at all, and living among us rough fisher-folk, for to all appearance he were as much out o' place as a limpet in a garden rockery. And you'll agree, sir, when you hears 'ow I fust became acquainted with him.

'Twas some while ago now, sir, and I'd a-been away from home, out foreign down along the coast o' Cuba, and 'twas a wretched night when I sets foot once more on Appledore quay. Dark, and wet, and blowy. No one weren't about, and the shops were all shut, and the street lamps had blowed out. The light from the barber's shop at the far corner were the only cheerful thing in sight. When I gets to it, what should I see but a little, youngish, clean-faced, bald-headed man in his shirt-sleeves, and with a white apron on, and big gold spectacles, crouching against the wall, trying to shelter hisself from the wind and wet. He looks up in a queer, blinky way, and I stops.

"Why," I says, "what's this? Where's old Puggy?"

"Mr. Pugstiles is dead," pipes the little man, "and I've bought his business. And some young men have thrown me out o' the shop," and he coughs behind his 'and very genteel.

'I opens the door. There was a dozen half-grown young chaps sprawling about the shop and roaring with laughing, and playing the fool. I never had no use for they scamps what hangs about the ferry and won't go to sea, and I was going to put 'em out when the little man stops me.

"No, thank you," he says very polite, "I would rather manage this alone."

'So, as he wouldn't let me help 'im, I goes off home. And that, sir, were the fust time as ever I see Mr. Harris. I've known him a long time now, but I've never forgot my fust sight o' him, crouching under the window, with the rain and wind beating down upon him.

'He were small and weak, and his chest were bad. That was why he come away from London. His voice were peepy like a chicken calling the old hen. He didn't drink, and he didn't smoke, and he didn't swear, and to say truth there was so many things against him, no one could say which was the wust. He were the fair butt o' the place; even the women and girls derided him.

'I was always a wanderer, and soon I goes off again, to Antwerp, and then away to Java. I were three good years older when next I landed on Appledore quay. 'Twas much such a night as t'other, cold and wet and blowy. But the light from the barber's shop was shining out on the wet stones, and Mr. Harris, who I do believe I hadn't thought on since I went away, comes into my mind again, all of a sudden.

"He'm gone. The place looks quiet enough now," says I to myself. Then I shoves open the door.

'Tis a long, narrow room, with benches at the side. They benches were full o' men sitting quiet waiting their turn. At the far end I see Mr. Harris shaving away like a good 'un, his bald head and his gold specs shining in the lamplight. I were so astonished I stood still without speaking. Then he says in the peepy little voice I remembered so well,

"I will ask one of you gentlemen kindly to shut that door, and keep it shut."

'And I'm blest if the most cantankerous chap in the place didn't get up quite quiet, and shut it without a word. And then I went home.

'Well, sir, I found Mr. Harris had got to be boss of the village. 'Twas the wonderfulest thing! He was the same little weak man I had fust seen, a surprised-looking creature with his big gold glasses,

and his pale face, and his mouth half open, but lor bless you! the whole place bowed down to him. He were Secretary to the Regatta, and Churchwarden, and sang in the choir, and sometimes read the lessons, and when the Vicar put in they peal of bells, with the thing by which you can play tunes on 'em, it was Mr. Harris who played on 'em all his spare time, till some folks who lived near the church, and didn't care for music, wished they bells further.

'I saw what he was for myself a few days after I got home. Me and Tom Jenkyns was passing his shop one fine morning, and Mr. Harris, in his white apron and gold specs, was on the quay peering about in the sun. Tom ain't a beauty when he's sober, which he weren't then by no means, so I gets in between 'em. Mr. Harris looks up in his gentle way through his glasses.

"Dear me, Mr. Jenkyns," he says, "I am sorry to see you with such a dirty chin! It wouldn't do for you to meet a young lady with that chin! Oh, no. You'd better come inside," and he 'as Tom in the shop and in the chair, and shaves him, and has 'im outside again, before Tom could think where to tell him to go to. Now that was a wonderful thing. Don't 'ee think so, sir?'

'Indeed I do,' I said, for I knew Mr. Jenkyns pretty well. 'How on earth did he manage him? How did he work it?'

'You may well ask that, sir. But 'tis more easy asked than told. How did he do such things? None can say. He never lost his temper; he never raised his voice, he never laughed—not out loud. And he looked at you in that queer, wondering way. And then his manners, and his politeness! And he never give in to nobody.

'Time went on, and he prospered. He was clever at his job, having the London tricks, and he went about attending on gentlemen's houses. His 'ealth come back, and he got smarter and younger looking, and he wore a white collar and a white shirt every day, even under his apron. How 'e could abear they collars I can't think. When my wife puts one on me I feels like a bird in a cage. But there, I s'pose it is all use. His white linen used to shine, and his eyes shine through his glasses. And he painted his 'ouse white, and put boxes of flowers in the windows. He rigged up a big red and white barber's pole, and on Sundays he 'oisted the Jack on it. He did well, and we was proud of him.

'And then, well then, just as everything was going so well, what do you think happened, sir?'

'Perhaps I can guess,' I said. 'The ladies. They took a hand?'



'They did, sir. They did. They'd looked on Mr. Harris all along with scorn, and troubled noth'en about him. Then all of a sudden it come to 'em how blind they'd been. And that here were a nice young man, for he were only a little over thirty, with collars and shirts and a business, and beautiful manners, and a white house with flowers in boxes, and all agoing begging. From that moment he hadn't a single hour's peace. They was all at him, though the old 'uns was the wust. They sent him things to eat, and tried to get him to convoy 'em back from church. Old Widow Paul were took ill on his door-step and had to be carried into the shop. Miss Belcher, she as married pore old Tom Cole after he 'ad broke his leg, attacked him on his business side, and sent him a parcel of combings to be made up. Me and a lot o' chaps was there when they come, and all I can say is, if they was all out of her 'ead, she must have 'ad a scalp like a tortoise-shell cat.

'But it was all o' no use. Mr. Harris didn't like any o' them, maid or widow, and he kept away from 'em. He was well guarded too; always there were someone in his shop. And the old woman who kep' house for him, her 'usband being in an 'ome for uncurables, helped to keep 'em off.

'Well, sir, things jogged along quite comfortable like till a queer thing happened. Me and Jenkyns was in his shop one brisk morning, when Tom, who 'ad a drop o' beer in him as usual, winks at me and says:

"You did ought to see my sister-in-law, Mr. Harris," says he; "she'd be the very young lady for you!"

'Mr. Harris was stropping a razor. He looks round in his queer blinky way, but instead o' putting Tom down he says:

"And what might she be like, Mr. Jenkyns?"

"She'm the fust girl in these parts. She lives with her mother to Lundy Island. She can cook, and she'm house-wise; what's more she'm a heaven-born laundress, and she'm big and dark with red cheeks and blue eyes, and her name is Mirandy," says Tom all in a breath.

'Mr. Harris listens with his 'ead on one side, and a funny look comes over his face and his eyes sparkles. Tom forgets hisself and spits on the floor, but instead o' requesting him to leave the shop Mr. Harris only says,

"And does the young lady ever come over here, Mr. Jenkyns?"

"She does not," says Tom; "she bides to home and 'elps her mother. Capt. Dark, who goes to Lundy every week with the mails, have many a time offered her a free pass on his lugger, but she wouldn't accept."

"But—but her affections?" says Mr. Harris presently very gently; "perhaps they are engaged? Such a young lady!"

"She ain't got no chap, if that's what you mean," says Tom; "there ain't none to Lundy. Last time I come away I thought 'twere a pity there weren't no young feller to arm 'er up the rocks. She were as pretty as a picture, with the waves breaking all about her feet."

"Sea King's daughter," says Mr. Harris to himself. But I heered 'im.

"She knows about you," Tom goes on. "I tells her in general conversation what a deal people think o' you. 'He must be a leader o' men,' says she. But there is a phottygraf o' her to home. I'll fetch 'un," and with that he goes out and Mr. Harris has me in the chair, and shaves me. His 'and were shaking so I were glad to escape without bloodshed. Then Tom comes back, and hands over the photty. Mr. Harris looks at it, and drops the razor. He gets pinker and pinker, and smiles and laughs and sets it on a little shelf and gazes upon it. As he doesn't speak we goes out quietly. Then I remembers I hasn't paid for my shave. So I goes back just in time to hear 'im say:

"An arrow—an arrow from the blind god's bow at last!"

'I says nothing, but puts down my penny and comes away on tiptoe.

'Well, sir, that puzzles me. And I asks my darter the school-mistress what he meant. All I can say is, sir, if that little god as she telled me of did shoot one o' his arrows at Mr. Harris, he must ha' got him right in the wes'cot. For from that moment he were a changed man.

'He were properly in love and no mistake! He worn't a bit ashamed o' it. He went about smiling and blushing, and very proud. The news soon got abroad, and the girls, some jeered, some laughed. Things moved along quickly. Letters passes between 'em. He 'ad his picture took, smiling, in a long black coat and a flower in his button-hole and a book in his 'and. He sends over bottles o' scent and sweet soaps and such truck from his shop. Then, one beautiful morning in the beginning o' October, he dresses hisself very smart, with a white wes'cot and shiny boots

and new straw hat, and embarks on Dark's lugger to go to Lundy to call on his young lady.

'Now, living as he did on the quay, no one 'adn't partic'ly noticed that Mr. Harris never went on the watter. Still Dark were surprised when he tells him he 'ad never yet crossed Appledore Bar. There was no wind, and Dark drops down with the ebb to the Bar, just about where we be now, and 'then all of a sudden Mr. Harris begins to be sea-sick. Dark carries many passengers, and 'tis a queer bit o' watter 'twixt here and Lundy, but he says he never see anyone so bad as Mr. Harris was that day. It fair tore the inside out o' him. He gets in such a state that Dark, seeing the job would be a long 'un for want o' wind, puts him in his dinghy and lands him on the golf-links. Mr. Harris crawls into one o' they bunker things and there he lay, and I did 'ear that the gentlemen played their golf right on top o' him afore he could move. In the evening he creeps back home and goes to bed.'

'Poor Mr. Harris!' I broke in, 'that was rough luck. How did he take it?'

'Well, he didn't give in, sir. Twice more he tried, but he never even got to the Bar. The second time they had to call the doctor to him. The doctor says his heart were weak, and it were very onwise to put such a strain on it, and he mustn't try them tricks again. Then the doctor puts a mustard plaster to him, and goes away.

'After that no one would take him. Steamers from 'Combe had stopped running or 'e might ha' gone by them. He felt hisself beaten, and his pride were broken. 'Twas a melancholly affair altogether. He thought he 'ad made a fool o' hisself, though how a man can be stronger than his stomach I can't see.

'And the wust o' all was to come. Mirandy thought she were a laughing-stock, and wouldn't help. She wouldn't come to him. If he wanted her, 'e must fetch her. She wouldn't leave Lundy by herself for any man, so she said. And everyone were laughing, and talking, and taking sides.

'He goes about neat and particular as usual, but the life and sparkle had gone out o' him. He were looked up to, and had 'is business and his nice house, but he didn't want 'em. He wanted Mirandy by his fireside, and her 'and in his.

'Late one evening I was on Look-out Hill, when I hears a footstep and sees Mr. Harris. He stands staring out to sea, and

presently up pops Lundy Light and twinkles and goes out, and pops up and twinkles and goes out again.

"When I sees that light," says Mr. Harris at last, "I thinks she is beckoning me"; and from the sound o' his voice I guessed he were near crying.

"It is not the fust time a queasy stomach have kept loving hearts apart," says I, wishing to comfort him.

"Love against stomach," he says very bitter, and walks away without saying good night.

'The fine weather held well into October that year, sir; then one night there come the wust blow known in these parts. It blew hurricane hard from the nor'-west on a big spring flood. The watter come right up the streets and flooded the houses. The whole place were in an uproar. And to make things wuss, about midnight, when the storm were at its height, the lifeboat rocket was fired. A big ship were ashore on Lundy.'

'I heard of that gale,' I said; 'a barge was put over the sea-wall at Instow.'

'That's right, sir. Well, you knows the rule about the lifeboat, fust come fust served. They that gets there fust goes. I grabs my oilies and runs. Me and Tom Jenkyns get there amongst the fust. Old Batten, the cox'un, gives us our cork jackets. 'Twas pitchy dark. There was no lights but the hurricane lamps and rope flares, and they kept blowing out. You couldn't hear yourself speak for the wind and watter. What was done were done dumb show, and the boys and people all yelling and shouting.

'We mans the boat. She was on her cradle and Batten were just giving the word to let go, when who should come shoving and pushing through the crowd but Mr. Harris. Tom and me was in the bows, and he spies us and clasps his 'ands.

"Take me, take me," he cries, and stretches up to us.

'Someone gives him a hoist up, and I grabs him, and pulls him in. I don't think Cap'n Batten see'd him till it were too late, what with the wind and watter and blowing about of the lights, and general confusion. And at that very moment the boat goes down the ways like a rocket, and if Mr. Harris 'ad been half a minute later she'd ha' been over him. And that would have been the end o' his troubles for good and all.

'He crawls under our seat and lays down. He had got on a little thin overcoat over his other clothes, but nothing to be no good. I throws down a spare jersey, and Tom a oilskin. Then

I tosses him a bottle o' tea and brandy as my missis always gives me.

"'You've done it this time!'" I yells. "'You must fend for yourself now. I can't help you.'"

'We drops down the river, for the tide was ebbing strong. And then I realises what the weight o' wind was. I've see'd some queer seas in my time, but never a wuss bit o' watter than the Bar here was that night, smooth as oil though it be now. The great wind met the great tide, and raised a hurricane sea; the boat herself couldn't ha' faced it if the wind hadn't just then hauled a couple o' points, and let us get a bit o' sail on her. Even then I didn't know half the time whether I were right side or wrong side up. Cold, wet, and rough work it were. But at last we gets over and away and shapes a course for Lundy.

'Before long the wind takes off a bit, and the sea begins to moderate. 'Twas a queer blow altogether. Not a drop o' rain to it, and all the wind'ard side o' the hedges were crisp and black as if fire had burned 'em. Then the sky cleared and the day broke. There were the barque ashore on the Hen and Chickens Rocks, north end o' the island. Two boats was standing by her, the Braunton and 'Coombe boats; so we rows along to the landing-place, which were sheltered, and brings up. And then me and Tom bends down and fishes up Mr. Harris.

'You recollect, sir, he 'ad been rolling about in the watter in the bottom of the boat the better part o' the night. I never see such a melancholly sight! He 'ad no hat, one shoe were gone, his shirt and wes'cot were half tored off. And the queasiness—! But never mind that! His gold glasses were smashed, and he 'ad a great bleeding cut over one eye from the bottle o' tea and brandy, which had broke. I judged him pretty near gone; he were cold as a stone, and half drowned.

'We turns to, and gives him a rub, and shoves a warm jersey on him, and Cap'n Batten, without making no remark, shoves down a bottle to us, o' brandy. That pulls him round a bit. He looks about him and points to the island. We nods, and he slips down again.

'Just then a boat puts off, and when she gets alongside I see Mirandy was in her. She looks as pretty as a picture, with her red cap and red cheeks, and blue eyes all of a sparkle. One o' our chaps clears his throat and coughs, and then another till all the boat were doing it. And even Cap'n Batten, though he were high

up in the Wesleyans, and 'ad ninety-eight grandchildren, winks at her.

'Then she says, looking up very demure, and trying not to laugh :

"If you please, Cap'n Batten, is my brother-in-law Tom Jenkyns in the boat ? And if he is may he come ashore ? Mother wants to see him."

"He be aboard, my dear," says Cap'n Batten, "but I can't let no one leave the boat. We been out all night, and we'm for home now. But you can give 'un a message. He'm down there forrard."

'The boat comes down and she gives the message, and then Tom says,

"We got something nice for you, Miry."

"For me ?" says Mirandy, shaking her curls. "What can that be ?"

"We've brought your young man. He'm come to fetch you after all," says Tom.

'We pokes up Mr. Harris from the bottom of the boat, and then, sir, they two has their fust look at one another.'

'By Jove, John !' I said, 'that must have been a moment ! What happened ?'

'I never see'd anybody's face, man or woman, change like Miry's did, sir. What she had expected him to be like I don't know ; but not what he was like then, I be sure. And fust one o' us laughs, and then another, till the boat's crew were busting their sides. Mr. Harris draws hisself together, and looks at us in that blinky, half-puzzled way, and fust one chap looks shamed and stops, and then another, till there was silence. Then he looks down again at Mirandy, and she laughs and gets red, and a funny look, pitiful like, comes into her face, and she gets scarlet red, and stretches out her arms. We lifts him down, and she helps 'im into her boat, and she wipes the blood from his face, and he puts his arm round her, for I reckon he'd 'ad about enough o' it. Then the boy rows them ashore, and we watches her 'elping him up the rocks, till we loses sight o' them. And then, sir, we sets sail for home.

'And that be the way, sir, that Mr. Harris come to Lundy Island for his wife. And I reckon he deserved her ! Don't you think so, sir ?'

'He did,' I said warmly, 'if ever a man did. Many a man has dared a lot for the sake of a girl, but I think Mr. Harris has earned a place among the bravest of them. He might well have died that

night, and he must have known the lifeboat wouldn't put back for him.'

'Yes, sir. He did, o' course. It were kill or cure, and he knowed it. I reckon he felt 'twere the only way to get there, so there it was! But 'twas all right. He stayed to Lundy, and Parson Heaven, who owned the island then, married them. And that's the way Mr. Harris got his bride, sir.'

'But hold on,' I said; 'that's not all the yarn. How did he get back again?'

'I'll tell you how he brought her 'ome, sir, if you pleases. The tide and the yarn will about finish together.

'Well, the fame o' Mr. Harris soon spread abroad, and all were anxious to welcome him 'ome. The women forgave him, and spoke well o' him, and were pleased he 'ad got Miry for his wife at last. The day Dark went over, chartered special, to fetch the happy pair home, Appledore were fair a-buzz. Dark, he puts a new suit o' sails on the lugger, and when he gets to Lundy and ships Mr. and Mrs. Harris he rigs up every bit o' bunting he can lay hands on. And home he comes booming with a nice soft breeze. Seventeen o' our ketches and two small barques was on the Bar that evening, waiting for the tide, and when they see the lugger coming, all dressed and glorious, they cheers, and gives her the road, and falls in behind. Then the lugger reaches the sand-barges, and they cheers and falls in behind too. And further up the river she finds the town band on a barge, and the little rowing and sailing boats all come out to shout and welcome the bride and bridegroom home.

'So up they comes. Up the river with a swingeing flood tide, and a fair breeze and a bright sky, and all shining and sparkling. The old walls and slips and yards was crowded, and everyone cheered and waved. The Vicar he started the bells, and hoists the flag on the church tower. 'Twas a grand and wonderful sight.

'Fust comes the lugger, with Dark and his mate keeping well out o' sight, and Mr. and Mrs. Harris standing well forrard so that all might see. And as they come Mr. Harris takes off his tall hat and bows and waves, this way and that way, while his bald head and new glasses shines in the sun. And Mrs. Harris, who 'ad got her wedding clothes sent over from 'Coombe, furls her white parasol, and bows that way and this way, very dignified, from the hips like. Then comes the band a-banging away, and then the little row-boats and sailing boats, and then the barges

and ketches and trawlers, and two barques, and all shouting and cheering. And what was best o' all, sir,' said old John, tapping my knee in his earnestness, 'there were no nasty steamers with their smeech and noise. 'Twas all good sails, sweet and pleasant.

'Well, Dark brings to, and drops anchor off the quay. Cap'n Batten goes off with his gig, me bein' one o' the crew. We brings Mr. and Mrs. Harris ashore, and they lands on the quay. The mob form a lane, and Mr. Harris leads his wife along it. Outside his 'ouse he stops, and waves his 'at again, and bows and smiles, and then puts his arm round Mrs. Harris and kisses her afore everyone. Then he opens the door, and takes her in, and shuts it.

'And that, sir, is how Mr. Harris brought his wife to Appledore.'

The old man paused and sighed. 'It were a brave sight,' he said. 'Mr. Harris is up for the Council now. He says 'twill be the proudest day o' his life if he gets put in. H'm wrong there. His proudest day were when he brought his wife home to Appledore.'

'But what about the queasiness coming home?' I demanded, 'and why didn't——' but my questions were only partially asked. A shiver came over the shining water; a myriad trickles and rivulets spread themselves over the great mass of sand that lay exposed to our right hand. The tide had turned.

'Get your rod, sir; they won't be long now. Watch the gulls! The queasiness? Oh, that never come back. The doing in the life-boat were kill or cure, and it cured him. Anyway, he never 'ad no more o' it. He—but look there, sir! There's the bass. My yarn's spun just in time.'

I flicked the blue-and-white minnow free of the rod. Old John knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and grasped the oars. For the rest of the morning *Perca Labrax* held the stage.

W. H. ADAMS.



## SIGNS AND NOTICES ON THE WESTERN FRONT.

BY F. J. SALMON.

FROM the military landing officer's placard, telling you where to report and what to do, which faces you on the quay before landing in France, to the stencilled board informing you that the recently captured portion of German trench you are standing in was called 'Stellung 19,' the 'Front' is plastered with notices and signs of every description.

Some are bald official orders of little interest, others are full of meaning and sometimes bring the grim realities of war home to one more than any other feature of the landscape, and yet others—the unofficial ones—are full of humour and eloquent of the cheerful spirit which comes uppermost in the British soldier, be his surroundings ever so miserable.

The most conspicuous ones are those that are intended to be seen by the swiftly passing motor-car—SPEED LIMIT X MILES PER HOUR,—GO SLOW PAST THE COLUMN,—AERODROME, DEAD SLOW TO AVOID DUST SPOILING THE ENGINES.

It is regrettable that sufficient notice is not always taken of such injunctions and those who are affected often have recourse to other tactics. Some are frankly threatening: DRIVERS' NUMBERS TAKEN AND REPORTED TO THE A.P.M. Others appeal to our better feelings—the notice is put in the form of a request, and a large THANK YOU at the end of the restricted stretch shames the scorcher who has kept his foot on the throttle. Others again resort to subterfuges, such as MIND THE BUMP! There is, of course, no bump, but by the time the driver has found this out and got up his speed again the column of lorries, or whatever it may have been by the roadside, is passed.

In addition to the military road restrictions there are still, of course, the curious mystic signs of the French Auto Club—the grid showing the level crossing gate, the cross for the cross roads and the V or Z for single or double corners.

In order not to make things too easy for the Hun agent most units do not label their billets or transport with their full title, but adopt certain devices and signs which are allotted to them. These assume the form of flowers, animals, or geometric designs of every

conceivable pattern and colour. They are to be seen everywhere—few people know what they mean and the spy who would sort out the signs and the units they represent has an unenviable job.

In some cases, however, where secrecy does not appear to be necessary, appropriate emblems are used. I remember one day my car broke down opposite a column of lorries belonging to an Australian unit. On the side and back of each of these vehicles was painted a white kangaroo.

My Scottish Sergeant-Major, though a fervent admirer of the gallant colonials, could not resist a gentle leg-pull. With an air of ignorant innocence he went up to a group of men and asked them what on earth they painted pictures of mice all over their lorries for! He affected to be immensely interested in their explanation.

As one approaches the front there are signs and directions innumerable—the arrows and flags showing the way to casualty clearing stations, signposts of all kinds showing the way to dumps, divisional baths, watering places for horses, canteens, headquarters, field cashiers, the local cinema show, or the Y.M.C.A. hut.

It is in the villages where the troops nearest the line are billeted that the greatest variety of amusing inscriptions is to be found. At a badly strafed cross roads in a certain village there is a small round shell hole, not unlike a booking office, in the wall of a house. Above it are the words: **BLIGHTY CORNER—BOOK HERE!** It was in the same village that the Xth Siege Battery had the whole side of their mess knocked out—you could drive a gun team through the hole where the door had been. On a bit of remaining wall are the words: **DON'T STAND OUT THERE KNOCKING—COME RIGHT IN!**

The streets are often labelled with names which at once give evidence as to the present or late occupants of the billets in them—Piccadilly, Prince's Street, Black Watch Street, Quebec Street, Springbok Laager.

The French names have, however, often been retained, and everywhere, for the benefit of the civilian population, one sees the warning—**TAISEZ VOUS, MÉFIEZ VOUS—LES OREILLES ENNEMIES VOUS ÉCOUTENT.** In more than one French office this notice is decorated with amusing pictures of Huns with huge ears listening from round corners.

In one place it has been possible to devise a bi-lingual notice—  
**DANGER** pay **ATTENTION** <sup>to the</sup> **TRAINS.**  
**aux**

A 'poilu,' who had come back to his village near the firing line on 'permission' and who wished to indulge in a little quiet gardening in the diminutive plot behind his cottage, was confronted with a large notice—DANGER—BLIND SHELL. His wife had to explain to him that a German 8-inch 'dud' had buried itself there. Being one whose duties lie on the lines of communication, he had not acquired that contempt for the unexploded shell which the 'Bairns-father' Tommy has and so the garden was left severely alone!

The position of this good French soldier is worthy of remark. He was a farrier at some way back supply depot and, in his whole life, had not heard a shot fired in anger. It was only when he came home on leave that he experienced the thrills of being under shell fire, and it was from his women folk that he had to learn the precise moment when he could decently retire to the cellar without an undue display of timidity! Ye Gods! What a leave! We may well be thankful if we get nothing more alarming than a Zeppelin raid when doing our week in town!

The French villagers who sell groceries, eggs, wine, or 'Anglish Beere' in the many half-ruined shops in the shelled area advertise their goods often with notices in the weirdest of Anglo-French spelling, and it is extraordinary in what surroundings some of them manage to carry on business.

I know of one little 'épicerie' which does a roaring trade in a house that has no roof and practically only three walls. The place has been made more or less weatherproof with some pieces of tin and a few planks. The rest of the village has been smashed to pieces. The neighbourhood is shelled almost daily, and whenever I pass I look, not without anxiety, to see if the plucky old lady's sign is still there.

At the ruined railway station of a certain town near the line the notice—'BILLETS'—still stands over the shattered booking office, and, sure enough, if you hunt around among the débris you will find tickets to Charing Cross! At another station a few miles away and also within sight of the German trenches the door labelled—'SORTIE'—is barred with wreckage and is about the only part of the building you can *not* walk in and out of at will!

Not very far away some of my own unit were once billeted in part of what was once a French Barracks, and it was here that I was shown some inscriptions of quite historical interest.

On the ground floor the walls bear the initials and names of 'regular,' 'terrier,' and K.'s army, together with those of many a

French poilu. The top storey has been smashed in by a 15-centimetre shell, but the stonework round the windows remains, and there, cut in the limestone, are to be found records of British soldiers who had tenanted those rooms under very different circumstances! J. JEMISON, PRISONER OF WAR—TAKEN AUGUST 1806—ALDERSON—ELLIS—WHEATLEY P. of W. 1806, 07, 08, 09, 10. Rather a long spell! but, knowing our French friends as we do now, we can be sure their imprisonment was not wholly unpleasant.

Some of the most incongruous of signs are the ordinary hand-posts at cross roads indicating the way to places over 'the other side.' I seldom pass one of these plain iron signs without thinking of the strange contrast between the life now and that of three years ago. An arrow points towards a straight white road leading over the hill—BAPAUME X KILOMÈTRES. Not so very far either and yet no man on earth could get there!—though a whole army can, and will in time. Over the crest the smooth surface is cut by innumerable trenches and barred with wire entanglements. Even here, at the cross roads, though well out of view, it is unwise to linger—the Huns have a machine-gun trained down the road and open indirect fire at intervals.

On first coming to the front it is curious to see an immortal name like Neuve Chapelle displayed on an ordinary everyday sign-post—what would an American souvenir hunter give for such a relic!

When travelling towards the line, as you begin to get near things the type of traffic notice alters. Motorists are no longer asked to 'mind the bump' nor horsemen to 'keep off the crops.' ROAD CLOSED TO ALL BUT SINGLE VEHICLES OR INFANTRY IN SMALL PARTIES shows that it is unwise to attract the attention of the German observation balloon opposite. Then you may come to a sentry with a red flag who stops you and points to a large placard—VEHICLES 4 MILES AN HOUR. DUST MUST NOT BE RAISED. The Hun has probably got a gun or two laid on this bit of road and his observer is watching patiently for a tell-tale wisp of dust! After this it will probably not be very long before you have to get out and walk. ROAD UNDER ENEMY OBSERVATION—NO TRAFFIC OF ANY KIND BEYOND THIS POINT DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS.

There will be another sentry here and he will show you the way to the communication trench unless your work is of some special nature and you have a pass that entitles you to walk on and risk it.

As soon as the trench zone is reached notices and signboards are more frequent than ever. In addition to our own direction posts and trench names there are also, frequently, relics of the French occupation. *VERS LE FRONT*, *VERS L'ARRIÈRE*, or the names of communication and fire trenches, such as *BOYAU RIDEAU*, *TRANCHÉE ILLOT*.

Again as we approach the firing line the remarks of the wag and the humorist are more frequent. In one place there is a board with a finger pointing to a peculiarly unhealthy sap and inscribed —*TO THE WAR!* A frequently shelled trench junction bears the legend—*DON'T STAND ABOUT HERE—THERE'S A WAR ON!*

The signpost *TO BERLIN* is of course common—or was.

Many of the dug-outs bear fantastic names and, in addition to notices giving the designation of those who occupy them, often have other inscriptions, hospitable or otherwise, such as *DEW DROP INN* or *NO ROOM HERE*. Those with a double entrance sometimes display the most fearful threats to those who would attempt to go in by the 'out' passage, whereas some such remark as *THE ONLY WAY* is inscribed over the correct entrance.

It must be remarked, however, that any apparent inhospitality is usually in the interests of the service—the nearer one gets to the front line the more hospitable are the Messes.

The mural decorations of the dug-outs are also worthy of more than superficial notice, as they often reflect the interests or character of the occupants. The pretty faces of 'Harrison Fisher,' 'Philip Boileau,' and other girls smile at one from the walls of many of these abodes, and Bairnsfather pictures caricaturing the very scenes of the life going on outside are to be seen everywhere. Grim pictures of the war from the pen of Matania and other artists may be found in the dug-outs of some of the more serious-minded, while others show their hankering after yachting, shooting, or racing. A total of many thousands of square feet of wall space must be taken up by cuttings from the 'Vie Parisienne,' and in many cases, more especially in the French lines, the occupant himself has been responsible for the pictures and designs in his quarters.

The enemy, too, has his notice boards, and some of them are written and stuck up on the parapet for our benefit or otherwise. Insulting remarks are not infrequently displayed in this way. Sometimes he brags about some big gun he is bringing up to shell our back billets with, sometimes we are told that he is quite ready for our attack on such and such a date—information which is

usually incorrect. The German notice with which continental travellers were, perhaps, most familiar before the war is conspicuous by its absence—NICHT HINAUSLEHNEN ; it would, however, be a most appropriate warning for visitors to the trenches !

On captured ground some of the German notices and signs still remain, but many have been replaced. A spot which had once been used by the Germans as a dump for stores is now labelled—FRITZ'S DUMP—UNDER ENTIRELY NEW MANAGEMENT !

Those who have their being in the observation posts are particularly shy of visitors and—No ADMITTANCE—placards of all descriptions greet one at their entrances. In this the observers show their wisdom, for the inexperienced may unwittingly give away the position to the enemy.

It is not always necessary to show oneself to do this. A few puffs of smoke from a pipe, or the use of a telescope without a protecting cowl to keep the sun from reflecting in it, may bring about destruction. I remember a careless Hun drawing attention to an otherwise well concealed post by flourishing an unshaded telescope in the sunlight !

A comic relief to a scene of havoc and destruction in an observation post was once presented to me by a portion of a printed notice giving instructions as to what observers were to look out for and report. The post had been spotted, and after the expenditure of many rounds, the enemy had at last obtained a direct hit. Crawling in through the débris to report the damage, I was confronted by a broken beam to which item 2 of the notice was still adhering—WHAT ARE THE GERMAN GUNS FIRING AT ? Would that the answer had been less easy to guess !

### IN SALONICA : KING CONSTANTINE'S FÊTE.

THE last day but one ! It was my first waking thought. The hot June sun, streaming in from the windows facing the beech-crowned summit of Mount Kotos, which rose above the bare lower downs, warned me it was time to be gone. The wise storks and swallows had already started on their long summer flight ; it was time to be following the birds North, as the *Thraki* was to sail next day.

It was a fascinating place I was leaving, this city on the outer wave of the whirlpool. Salonica had proved unexpectedly interesting, with its little known treasures of art and archæology, and its strange old medley of East and West now further complicated by a new Frankish crusade.

Here were the same mixed feelings of admiration and contempt as at Byzantium, when the kings and knights of Western Chivalry camped for the first time without the walls. Here, too, surprised and equally unwilling hosts watched the foreign soldiery ride clattering through their streets. Here were the same alarums and excursions, the same continual vague, political intrigues, and at the back of it all the same real indifference as to whether French, German, or Russian finally won the Holy Shrine,—or what would seem more likely now, Franco-Spanish Jews.

Each day brought some novel turn of the wheel of Greco-German affairs or some fresh discovery in my exploration of the old Byzantine city on the hill. The summer sun, which woke me up betimes, left me lazily counting one by one, through the mist of my mosquito net, the tall white minarets of the town. Delicate, slender shafts holding the Muezzin's gallery high in the air, they rose on terrace above terrace to the last broken spire, near where the brown brick towers of the Heptapyrgeion stood out clear-cut against the sky.

These minarets, with their finely-contrasting cypress trees, are numerous at Salonica, for the Turks invariably added one when they altered a church into a mosque. The Greek king did well to leave them standing when he took back the town from the Moslems. Apart from their picturesque beauty, the minarets still serve a useful purpose ; for guide books leave one in Old Greece, they are not to be had at Salonica. Should your way



lie down the tram-ridden Boulevard Reine Olga, where the roses in the villa gardens are powdered thick with dust, the public will direct you proudly. Or they will cheerfully point out the Rue Venizelos, and even follow you up the dim Turkish Bazaar at its end, urging you to buy from their various eager friends as you pass. Beyond that, across the Roman Via Egnatia, which cuts the town in half, nobody seems to know what happens, nor should a well-brought-up Salonican wish to go.

But the minarets beckon; they prove the best of guides. Their white spires give a sure clue to the whereabouts of the ancient mosques and churches. And here, through my window, I could count most of these landmarks by which I steered. Nearest and tallest rose the minaret of Sancta Sophia, Holy Wisdom, the cathedral church of the Metropolitan.

During the ceremonies of Holy Week and Easter great crowds had gathered here. Good Friday was the day of the people's procession. The peasants from the scattered villages brightened the town with the cheerful reds and blues of their national costumes, and at night all the world walked singing solemn chants, following the bishops in their glittering copes and jewelled mitres and the simple flower-arched bier.

Easter Eve proved to be the official festival of the Greek army and government. A dense mass of people filled the church and surged confusedly in the darkness of the open square outside it; each man, woman, and child, holding an unlit candle in their hands—some large, some small—painted with holy symbols and flowers; careful souls, mindful of their gala clothes, taking pains to hold their candle gingerly by its long cotton wick.

Within the building the deep gloom was hardly broken by the lights at the two lecterns, at which the laity read by turns, and the glimmer from where behind the icon-screen came the murmur of priests intoning. After what felt an interminable period of waiting, it was midnight. 'Christ is risen,' came the cry. The heavy gold embroidered curtain rose, disclosing within the sanctuary the long, low Altar of the Last Supper. Out poured a brilliant procession of ecclesiastics, marching down the nave to take their stand on the platform in the outer court; everyone in the crowd lighting his candle from his neighbour's as the *cortège* passed along. In a moment the church was bright from end to end. The massive pillars stood like rocks in a waving flickering sea of gold. Then, for the first time, the great Madonna of the apse shone revealed.



Enthroned on high, against the hollow, glowing background of mosaic, She held out Her Son to bless a strange assemblage under the dome, where British and French officers stood with their Greek comrades, headed by the Greek General Commanding, and all his staff, each holding a lighted taper in honour of His resurrection.

What a night for the German aircraft, suddenly flashed across our minds! In the very street outside, now lit with a thousand lights and packed with human beings, I had seen their ugly work only a few weeks before. I shuddered as we forged our way home.

Up the hill directly above Sancta Sophia, the somewhat stumpy minaret of St. Paraskevi reared its head. This grand fourth-century basilica, finer than any building of its kind at Constantinople, is now given over to the Greek refugees from Asia Minor. Their carpets and piteous coloured rags hang in complete disorder from its high wooden galleries.

The platform for the Mihrab, facing towards Mecca, remains aslant the apse; although a tiny altar at its northern end claims the church back for its Christian builders—an altar so small and poor, adorned by such dim, feeble lights, I hardly noticed it at first the day I found my way in there. Here were no crowds, no pomp of a church militant, only the begging children who trotted in my wake. The place appeared empty except for a solitary peasant woman, bowed in prayer before the icon on the little shrine, praying, no doubt, for a safe return to her distant home in Syria—her dress proclaimed how far the wars had driven her. She stood there, a strange impassive figure in her full dark purple trousers and dull red veil, silhouetted sharply against the cream plaster walls and the cipollino columns brown with age and dirt. A faint blue smoke curled from under the unseen cooking-pots in the gallery behind her, blurring the light from the large windows and drifting out across the wide open space. Through it, the arches of the nave and triforium gleamed with the rose and gold and green of their splendid floral mosaics.

Two more great churches the minarets pointed out. St. Demetrius, dedicated to the City's patron saint, is a basilica not unlike that of the refugees. The mosaics here have a curious silvery sheen, but the marbles are the church's special glory. By some piece of good fortune the original Byzantine casing of the walls is almost intact. Remembering how this much coveted city has suffered, how, time after time, it has been besieged, burnt, sacked—for it stands where two famous highways cross, from Rome to

Byzantium, from Vienna to the Aegean and the East—it is little short of marvellous that any fine old buildings are left; still more so that these treasures should have escaped the general doom of such things. A wonderful mellow tone pervades the great interior, where the one spot of brilliant colour is the gold flag of the Double Empire, which holds the eagles of the East and West aloft.

Alas, that modern Greece should have St. Demetrius in its clutches! The Turks at least left the marbles much as they found them. The Greeks have written their recent triumph in huge black letters right across the apse; October 1912—there is no escaping that or the monstrous Austrian stove—another claimant for the double eagles, which stretches its ugly arms over the nave.

St. Demetrius, as is only right, was used to shelter soldiers rather than refugee civilians. Sketching there I often wondered why so many Greeks in khaki wandered in and out. Very devout people, I thought, though their casual lounge and bored air rather belied them. Anyway, I decided, they cannot all be former sacristans on leave. To Frenchmen of every rank I soon grew accustomed; the blue field uniform was invariably to be seen admiring, drawing, or measuring, each time I went there. Even a British officer strayed in at times, some odd, adventurous spirit who cared for such things—unlike his kind. But why all these shabby Greek Tommies?

One afternoon in the gathering dusk when it grew too dark to work and I was exploring the empty upper galleries, to my astonishment I nearly fell over a sick man. Startled and peering down I saw it was a soldier curled up on his blanket bed. A comrade was hastening to him bringing a pannikin full of water, his footsteps echoing down the long gallery behind me. I beat a hurried retreat, noticing as I did so the kit and beds of a whole company, neatly rolled up for the day, lying in the shadow of the low marble railing. But this was in May; since then there are fewer Royalist troops tucked away in the heart of Salonica.

The furthestmost great church—my favourite among all those the minarets showed me—was the round fortresslike St. George, built in the third century. It stands near the Arch of Galerius—the Roman arch of triumph now resounding to the clang of the British army motor-lorries. From its massive strength and air of grave simplicity, it might be one of the towers guarding the eastern wall of the town. No columns interrupt the view within, and on the

majestic dome, whose sweep leaves everything clear, is the greatest monument in mosaic handed down from antiquity. It represents a succession of saints, none later than the time of the Emperor Constantine, who gaze pityingly down from the bronze and gold Portals of the Heavenly City. The tall figures are just stiffening from the grace and truth of the classic masters into the cramped outlines of the monkish artists, who feared to study the human form lest their models turned to wicked, tempting demons, all claws and teeth and tail, under their very eyes. The Turks were even more prejudiced on the subject, and defaced figures wherever met, no matter how many robes they wore. But the charm of the whole is quite unspoilt ; it lies in the background.

The designer's naïf joy in a fresh architectural expression shines from this Byzantine Paradise of Revelations. It radiates from these walls whose foundations were Jasper, Sardonyx, and Emerald—Chalcedony from the Macedonian peninsula our troops now hold—and all the other stones whose names are songs, from these arches springing one above another, these shell-ribbed cupolas and alcoves, these vistas of limitless arcades, where storks stand sentinel and peacocks spread their jewelled tails, coloured like cornflowers in grass.

On the low vaulting of the surrounding chapels, hollowed out in the twenty foot thick fortress wall, humble local birds find a place. Ducks and quails, cranes and smaller wild fowl from the Vardar marshes cover the diapered gold ground. Under the Osmanli rule these chapels were reserved for the different companies of the Sultan's Regiment of Guards, hence the church's Moslem name—Orta Sultan Osman Djami.

Last to be discovered at Salonica are the few Byzantine churches so small and insignificant they were never claimed by the Turks. No minarets point these out. But they are well worth finding for their splendid carved and painted screens.

Backwards and forwards the churches' fate has swung. Bullet holes pit their soaring spires, witness to the most recent changes. Feast days and Holy days abound in this town of many faiths. Perhaps the prettiest among them is the Feast of Bairam, when the minarets that remain in the hands of the Moslems twinkle with rows of little lights. Then from my window I could see just how many mosques were left ; each one marked by a tall fairy candle, burning steadily on the blue darkness of the hill.

'Signora, wake, make haste, your Excellency's boat leaves to-day at noon!'

My reverie over the old town came to an abrupt stop. If this were true, it was useless trying to decide where among all my favourite haunts I would sketch for the last time.

Eudocia, the good-natured Greek-Italian maid, making a noisy entry with my coffee, brought the surprising, unwelcome news.

'But the *Thraki* doesn't sail until Saturday!' I protested. 'Are you sure?'

Yes, she was positive. Had not Anastasie, the porter, told her this moment, having got it casually from the haughty-looking Greek Staff Colonel as he flicked imaginary dust off his boots after his early morning ride?

Well, I could not see V. again, or even let him know I was going; that much was certain. But there was only one thing to be done, and with a sinking heart I started to finish packing as rapidly as I could. In the middle of it I remembered I must rush off to the bankers who acted as my Salonican 'Cook'; the day before, when I had tried to see them, having been one of the numerous fête days, when banks and shops were shut.

In the end there was too much to be done: I had to give up the chase. The *Thraki* beat me, though not before I had boarded her—luggageless. One peep into the tiny den I was to have slept in made me thankful enough to see her start. The *Syria*, '*le bateau de luxe*' her agents proudly called her (that is the one Greek ship whose decks were ever known to be washed), was to sail on Monday; I should see V. again to say good-bye. All appeared to be for the best.

He rode in that evening nothing doubting, bringing me wild Madonna lilies, with sharp-pointed petals, from the hills above Kerech-Koi; how sad to have missed them and him.

The next day, the day my ship was to have sailed, the town was again *en fête*. It was more than a question of shutting the banks and shops; this time the whole place was gay with pale blue and white bunting for the festival of King Constantine, Bulgaroctonos (Slayer of Bulgars)—an old title of the Greek Emperors somewhat too hastily revived. St. Sophia was to be the scene of another official service, one of triumph at past victories over the King's present friends.

Rather a tactless subject for so much rejoicing, I could not

help thinking, as I heard the Greeks of the hotel going gaily out. But, then, in the Balkans people's politics change rapidly and irony falls flat.

That day things were to move even faster than usual. The service, if it was held, must have been short. It seemed only a moment before the officials were back. It was a very crestfallen little party I met on my way downstairs. The swords of the Staff Colonel and his smart friends clanked dolefully up the marble steps. The civilians, in their ceremonial evening dress and top hats, looked as if they had been to a ball the night before which had rather disagreed with them. I missed the Railway Controller, a delicate little man with birdlike eyes and walk and a monstrous moustache, who had so far successfully dodged all our demands to open the new line connecting Salonica with Athens. But his *confrère*, the Censor, was there, quite shorn of his heavy importance. Even the cheerful fat Banker, who made it his business to keep the pro-German party in roars of laughter every meal-time—presumably over the Allies' gullibility—for once hadn't a smile left and seemed completely nonplussed.

A shot rang out. Or was it only an extra loud bang on the tramway outside? There was evidently some fresh trouble—perhaps a daylight Zeppelin raid. Just then a French friend passed.

'Haven't you heard?' she said, excitedly. 'We have taken the post-office and the telegraph; not without some fighting. It was early this morning. Come out with me and see what arrives.'

King Constantine's fête seemed to be off.

The life of the seaport was going on much as usual, except that the quay in front had rather an empty look. But as we turned up a side street, to avoid the press of the Rue Venizelos, we ran into a big crowd. What it was all about was difficult to discover, but it surged round a bewildered-looking Serbian soldier who was being dragged away with some difficulty by a patrol of Greek police. We flattened ourselves against the wall while the angry waves swept past.

In their back-wash we came on the Official Photographer hard at work, charmed to have something to take at last. We questioned him eagerly, but he had only the vaguest notion as to what was on foot. Anyway, here was copy, when the photographs appeared in the London papers the editors could christen them what they liked. And he rushed on in the wake of the ebb-tide, snapshotting as he went.

The Bureau des Postes was our objective. There had been brave doings there, so we had been told. But the spot, when we reached it, appeared fairly peaceful. In a corner of the square a little knot of people had collected round a tall Serbian officer, while a weedy-looking Greek youth explained with some courage, as it seemed to us from the looks of the bystanders, what proved to be the true story of the arrest we had just witnessed.

He had been sitting quietly in that café there up the street, everyone round him busy discussing the King's fête, when a Greek at the next table had shouted out, suddenly: '*À bas le Roi!*' and then instantly jumped up and denounced the innocent Serbian as the ill-wisher of Greece's idol, and called loudly for the police—*lèse-majesté* being as grave a crime in Greece as in Germany. It was a put-up job.

The tall officer listened attentively, taking notes as he did so. Then mounting his horse, he vanished after the photographer and his prey.

We turned to the post-office at last to try and send a telegram necessitated by my enforced change of plans. But for all its peaceful air it was closely guarded. The imposing French 'dragon' at the entrance much regretted, but it was impossible for Madame to do any such thing. 'Why, what had happened?' Ah, how should he know? Those were his orders. A British Tommy at another door proved equally correct, but less unbending. He knew nothing officially, of course. 'Oh, yes, the post-office had been collared this morning—about time, too.'

'There had been trouble, hadn't there?'

'Oh, bless you, no, Mum. They looked very fierce-like at first, fired a few shots and all that, but when they saw we meant it, came out as tame as a Macedonian tortoise.' As to what was happening inside, he knew no more than we did, but he ventured to guess 'The Frenchmen are going through Tino's billets-doux to the Bulgars all right.'

Now the crowd had melted the empty streets wore a curiously menacing air. The grim black vistas of tightly closed iron doors and shutters were more unpleasantly suggestive than the former rioting and noise. Calling on a friendly Consul and his wife was a work of some difficulty. Other unexpected sentries had to be faced. It took time before the suspicious old Turkish concierge would open the courtyard door wide enough to let us squeeze through. The family party within were quite cheerful and un-

concerned, but as Monsieur remarked when we were on the point of leaving: 'Ces émeutes arrivent souvent ici; nous avons eu trois guerres. Je trouve c'est toujours mieux de rester chez soi.'

We took his advice. As we reached home I encountered the Commander, delighted with the change. Now he could stop these wretched local steamers blowing their sirens all day long below his office windows. For there was more noise and fuss when a coasting boat left the quay-side than the whole fleet of the largest liners could possibly require.

The English military band, which played to the populace every Saturday afternoon, had become quite a feature of life at Salonica; one could fancy oneself in a peaceful Anglo-Indian station watching the curious semi-Oriental throng gathered at the foot of the old White Tower—a tower built by the Venetians, formerly part of the town walls, but now left stranded like a huge rock in a child's seashore garden.

The afternoon of the 'émeute' the White Tower looked strangely quiet. Gone were the gaily-coloured crowds, the family parties of Israelites and Dumés, the men in their historic furred gabardines wearing the Moslem fez, their wives in their long satin coats and brocade aprons—blue, prune, and violet, the favourite Jewish colours—with curious green, parakeet-like head-dresses, low lace bodices, and necklaces of many rows of seed pearls; the younger women copying Athens and Paris in short skirts and high-heeled yellow boots, for fashions change now the Turks have left.

No pipers played that afternoon to a delighted audience who followed their every movement up and down. The soldiers and sailors of the Allied nations, who usually collected to talk to their friends while they listened to the music, were nowhere to be seen.

The place was empty I thought as we reached it. But, no, among the beds of pansies, stocks, and daisies and the carefully watered little plots of grass, great, grey motor-lorries were drawn up. And there were the French machine-gunners perched on their guns. Very bored they looked, with a populace and soldiery which sat tight behind its iron doors and shutters and wisely refused to come out.

A forest of blue and white flags, festooned with fir branches, fluttered valiantly in the breeze. But no other sign of life and festivity could be seen down the three main roads commanded by the guns. There was nothing doing. As we passed, the soldiers in field-blue were reduced to re-reading their month-old *Illustrations* and *Petit Journals*.



Under the pine trees in the little café garden beyond, at this hour usually crammed with people, only two nursemaids gossiped together, while their accompanying children and dogs played about unrebuked in the sun.

A nervous-looking waiter brought us tea, having peeped out cautiously and spied us sitting at one of his little tin tables close to the sea-wall. The revolution was falling flat, we had given it up, and were busy discussing the various possibilities of catching a ship home—a matter of great moment to my present companion fresh from six months unrelieved front trenches.

We had not been there long before a gardener appeared and started his evening round of watering. The grass and flowers must not suffer, whatever happened outside his domain. As he came towards us I looked up and noticed that a few more people had crept out and were moving about aimlessly. Then some soldiers walked in carrying instruments; though late, there was to be a band after all.

It settled itself, got out its music, struck up and was soon playing merrily. But to our astonishment it was a Greek band this time—our soldier and sailor musicians were otherwise occupied while General Sarraïl took the town. Since the early morning most of the Greek troops had been shut up in their barracks, in case of serious trouble. These must have been specially released. However it was done, it was managed quite amicably, and as we left, instead of an Allied band playing in a Greek seaport, this Saturday afternoon here was a Greek band playing in a French enclave. The 'émeute' had ended. King Constantine's fête-day was not without music of sorts.

SITA.



### WILLIAM DE MORGAN: A REMINISCENCE.

ONE dark and snowy day last winter a distinguished company met in the Old Church at Chelsea to do honour to the memory of Henry James. Once more this January, under the same grey and gloomy skies, with the same war-cloud hanging like a pall over the land, another memorable gathering took place in the ancient riverside shrine, when the last rites were paid to another illustrious Chelsea resident, William De Morgan. Henry James, greatly as he had endeared himself to us all and nobly as he had thrown in his lot with England in these anxious times, had only recently made his home in this neighbourhood, but William De Morgan had been closely connected with Chelsea for nearly half-a-century. Chelsea was the scene of his triumphs both in art and literature. Here he set up his first kiln, in a garden at the back of Cheyne Row, and here too, in later years, he wrote his famous novels.

His family was of French origin. He told me how one of his Huguenot ancestors, four generations back, went out to India, and married two Frenchwomen in succession. His son, Auguste De Morgan, came over to England, settled here, and became the grandfather of the distinguished mathematician, Augustus De Morgan, who held the post of Professor of Mathematics at University College for more than thirty years, and married the daughter of another mathematician of note, the Cambridge Lecturer William Frend. This Mrs. De Morgan was a remarkable woman, of cultured tastes, whose beautiful face and lively interest in the people and things about her made her still attractive in old age. She is fondly remembered by many of her friends in Chelsea. Their eldest son, William De Morgan, was born at 69 Gower Street in 1839, and took up painting as a profession, before he turned his attention to pottery. His sister, Mary De Morgan, who died eight or nine years ago, was an able and talented woman—a marked contrast to her brother in appearance, being small and slight, with a sharp voice and abrupt manner. She amused people by her quick repartees and witty sayings and wrote several fairy-tales, which recalled Hans Andersen by their imaginative charm. The first of these—'On a Pincushion'—was published in 1877, and illustrated with drawings by William De Morgan; the last—'Wind-fairies'—appeared in 1900, and was dedicated to Angela, Dennis, and Clare

Mackail, the grandchildren of Edward Burne-Jones. Mary De Morgan also wrote a striking novel, called 'A Choice of Chance,' which was published in 1887, under the *nom de plume* of William Dodson, a name which effectually concealed the writer's identity. The gift of story-writing was evidently in the family, although in William De Morgan's case it was to lie dormant for many years.

In 1871, on the death of his father, William De Morgan brought his mother and sisters to live in Cheyne Row, two doors from Carlyle's home, and began to make his fine lustre-ware in a picturesque old building known as Orange House. After his marriage to Miss Evelyn Pickering in 1888, he settled in a charming old house in The Vale, where he and his wife lived until it was pulled down more than twenty years later, when they moved into a corner house in Church Street. Their winters, however, were chiefly spent in Florence, partly for the sake of De Morgan's never robust health, partly in order to be near his wife's uncle, the painter, Spencer Stanhope, who was a prominent member of the English colony in that city. But after the death of this relative the ties which bound the De Morgans to Florence were loosened, and in 1912 they finally gave up their Italian home to spend the whole year in Chelsea.

From his early youth William De Morgan was the intimate friend of Burne-Jones and William Morris, whose artistic aims and tastes he shared, and was a frequent and welcome visitor at the Grange and at Kelmscott House. His simple childlike nature, his ready wit and love of fun, made him a great favourite with the young people in both households. Lady Burne-Jones has told us what an active part he took in their family life, both in joy and sorrow, at one time amusing her children and their young cousin, Rudyard Kipling, with his merry pranks, and on another occasion, when she herself was dangerously ill, sitting up all night with her distracted husband. And Miss May Morris remembers the delight of her whole family when her father wrote to say that he was bringing De Morgan back from town to spend a few days at Kelmscott. De Morgan himself was never tired of recalling these blissful summer holidays in the old Manor on the Upper Thames, when he and Morris roamed up and down the lovely Cotswold country in search of a suitable place for their workshops. Eventually, in 1882, he built a factory for his tiles near Morris's works at Merton Abbey, and his jars and dishes of glowing ruby and mother-of-pearl were always to be seen in the Morris Company's

showrooms in Oxford Street. In beauty of shape and colour, these lovely things recalled the wonderful Gubbio ware wrought by Messer Giorgio in Renaissance times, while De Morgan's Persian tiles came so near to those which Lord Leighton brought from Damascus to decorate his Arab court, that it was almost impossible to detect any difference between the two.

Unfortunately, in spite of its decorative charm and of the general admiration which it aroused, De Morgan's pottery never proved a commercial success. This was partly due to the great cost of production, and partly no doubt to his own lack of business capacity. Like the French potter Palissy, whom in many ways he resembled, De Morgan's fertile brain was always busy with fresh ideas, always starting out on untrodden tracks and attempting new experiments. If one of these happened to prove successful, he promptly frittered away his earnings in making fresh ventures on a new and grander scale. His kindness and liberality to the workmen in his service were unbounded. He took the deepest interest in their welfare, and countless instances of his generosity to individuals are on record.

During the winters which he spent abroad he was still busy with new experiments and inventions, and set up a shop in his garden in Florence, where he trained Italian workmen to paint tiles with Persian colours under the glaze. But by degrees his connection with the work ceased, and about ten years ago the factory was closed and the moulds destroyed, to the great regret of all lovers of art.

It was just at this moment, when William De Morgan was already sixty-six, that he startled the world and amazed his most intimate friends by revealing himself in a new and altogether unexpected capacity. Suddenly, without any warning, the great potter appeared before the public as a successful novelist. There are comparatively few men in any age who have attained distinction in two separate branches of art. Great poet-painters there have been, it is true, such as Michelangelo in Italy of the Renaissance, and Dante Rossetti in our own times, but there was generally a close connection between their creations in the different arts. Either the picture was inspired by the sonnet, or the verses gave birth to the painting. It would be difficult to trace any connection between De Morgan's tiles and the novels which his prolific pen poured forth in his later years. Yet, as I have often heard him explain, his novels were indirectly the result of his work as a potter. It was during these first fifty years of his life, when he was busily

engaged in making experiments and looking about for boys and men whom he could train to help him, that he acquired the familiarity with the working classes and dwellers in the slums which is one of the most striking features of his novels. The close and daily contact into which he was brought with his own potters, listening to their talk and watching them at work as he sat in a corner of the factory making designs or meditating new inventions, gave him that intimate knowledge of their habits and language, that insight into the points of view and prejudices of their class of which he writes with so much sympathy and kindly humour.

As a boy he remembered being told by his father, the professor of mathematics, that he possessed some literary power, and that if he applied himself to books he might do something in that line. But in those early days, young De Morgan's sole ambition was to be a painter. So he entered the Academy school and, like Charles Heath in 'Alice-for-Short,' gave up painting to design stained glass, giving this up in turn when, about the age of thirty, he started his experiments as a potter. But he never made any attempt at original composition until he wrote his first novel, 'Joseph Vance,' when he was well on in the sixties.

It was at this interesting moment in De Morgan's career, in the summer of 1906, that I had the good fortune to meet him at a country house, where he was staying with one of his oldest friends. We had often met before, generally at Burne-Jones' house, and as I sat by his side at dinner we recalled those happy times and sighed for the days and the friends that were no more. George Howard, Lord Carlisle, who happened to be my other neighbour, joined in our conversation and agreed with all De Morgan said of the brilliant play of fantasy, the wit and tenderness, the indefinable charm which made our beloved painter the most delightful companion in the world. And with tears in his eyes, De Morgan said how it was always thus in life. 'We fail to realise the importance of the present and let the good days go by, without any attempt to keep a record of our friends' words and actions, until it is too late.' Towards the end of dinner he dropped his voice and whispered that he had a secret to tell me. 'The fact is,' he said, 'I have perpetrated the crime or the folly—whichever you choose to call it—of writing a novel, which has just been published, and what is more wonderful I have in my pocket a flattering review of the book, in to-day's *Spectator*!' He went on to tell me how the story of 'Joseph Vance' had grown into being; how when he was ill and away in Florence, a rheumatic hand disabled him from drawing, so he took to scribbling

instead, and began to jot down ideas that came into his head, on scraps of paper; how his wife encouraged him to go on with the story; and how he became interested first of all in the character of Christopher Vance, the drunken old builder, and then in that of his heroine, 'Lossie,' till the actual writing became a pleasure and the book took its present shape. The speaker's earnestness and animation, I remember, excited Lord Carlisle's curiosity, and after dinner he asked me if what he had caught of our conversation could be true and De Morgan had really written a novel. There was no denying the fact, and soon we were all reading 'Joseph Vance' and the friendly review which had given its author so much satisfaction.

From the first the success of the book was phenomenal. The girls in the office where the manuscript was typed became so much absorbed in the story that they forgot to go on with their work. The critics were unanimous in their chorus of praise, in spite of the unusual length of the book, which at first seemed likely to prove a stumbling-block. Mr. Punch pronounced 'Joseph Vance' to be quite the best novel which he had read for a long time, and the public on both sides of the Atlantic hailed the advent of a new star in the literary horizon.

The plunge once made, William De Morgan went merrily on, and novel after novel poured forth in rapid succession from his pen. 'Joseph Vance' was followed in 1907 by 'Alice-for-Short,' which contains the author's reminiscences of his experiences as an art-student, and is dedicated to the memory of Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris. Then came 'Somehow Good,' in which the lively 'Sally' rivalled his first creation, 'Lossie,' in the affections of the writer, as in those of his readers. Indeed, after the manner of authors, De Morgan confessed that he had fallen in love with his latest creation, but that he was not in the least responsible for Sally's erratic conduct, as she simply went her own way and did whatever she liked with him. The wife's meeting with her long-lost husband was, he sometimes said, the passage by which he wished to be remembered, just as Thackeray used to say that Becky Sharp's pride in her Guardsman was what he himself should select as the best thing that he had written.

In 1909 De Morgan published a two-volume novel, 'It Never can Happen Again,' which he dedicated to the memory of Ralph, second Earl of Lovelace, in remembrance of two long concurrent lives, and an uninterrupted friendship. Lord Lovelace (who died in 1906) he always said had been his earliest friend in Chelsea. His mother,

Ada, daughter of Lord Byron, and first Countess of Lovelace, used to study mathematics with Professor Augustus De Morgan, and their children had known each other from the age of eight or nine. This new book was hardly as successful as its predecessor although the episode of the blind beggar Jim and 'Lizer Ann was as fresh and delightful as anything its author had ever written.

Lord Lovelace himself once aptly described De Morgan's novels as 'the work of an idealist with realistic details,' combining the sentiments and traditions of the Victorian age with the more analytical methods of the present generation. His sensitiveness to the deep impressions left on the youthful mind by passing sights and sounds, and to the strange way in which these trivial incidents weave themselves about the great events of life, was a noteworthy feature of De Morgan's writings. Another striking feature of his novels was the vigour and animation of the dialogue, whether he chronicles the sayings of East-end beggars or West-end charwomen—a class with which he seems to have possessed a close and intimate acquaintance—or whether he sets down the lively prattle of Florentine gardeners and barbers or the almost preternatural quickness of repartee possessed by the small urchins of the slums. These are all recorded in the writer's own inimitable fashion, with the same note of originality, the same gentle irony and warm sympathy, together with a youthful optimism which never seemed to grow old. Dickens, it has often been remarked, was the model on which De Morgan fashioned his style, but there is less of caricature in the characters which De Morgan draws, they are more real and human, and always lovable. The digressions in which he often indulges, taking the reader into his confidence and moralising on love and parting, on death and a future life, seem rather to recall Thackeray.

In his next novel, 'An Affair of Dishonour,' which appeared in 1910, De Morgan made a new departure. Leaving contemporary England and London of the Victorian age, he placed the scene of Sir Oliver and Lucinda's adventures in the days of the Restoration, and introduced a graphic account of the naval battle of Solebay into the story. Several good judges rank this tale amongst the author's best efforts, but De Morgan himself was not of this opinion, and when an admirer congratulated him on his new 'tour de force,' he replied 'Say, rather, tour de faiblesse!'

The enforced break up of his old home in the Vale, Chelsea, and the move to another house in Church Street, were serious interruptions in De Morgan's placid life, and when we met in the following summer he told me that for the last six months he had

not been able to write a line, adding that it was perhaps just as well, since during the last five years he had written and published above a million and a quarter words! By the end of 1910, however, he and his wife were happily settled in their new home, to which they soon became deeply attached. That winter they spent Christmas in London for the first time, and before long decided to give up their house in Florence and make their home entirely in Chelsea. Here they lived happily, surrounded by old friends and their own beautiful works of art—De Morgan's lustre-ware and Persian tiles, and his wife's pictures. Mrs. De Morgan was an accomplished artist, and before her marriage her works appeared for many years at the Grosvenor and New Gallery exhibitions. Her industry was still as great as ever, and she went on painting her pictures while De Morgan wrote his novels. Music was another of their favourite occupations. They were regular attendants at the Albert Hall Sunday Concerts and the musical afternoons at Leighton House, and when they settled in Church Street De Morgan found a new source of delight in the pianola. He became the proud possessor of an Angelus, which he played all the evenings, and declared that it first revealed Beethoven to him. But long before this he had loved and studied the great master's works, and readers of 'Joseph Vance' will remember the fine passage in which he describes the comfort that came to the bereaved widower in a dark hour, through hearing a movement of the Waldstein Sonata.

During the winter and spring of 1911 De Morgan found time to write another short novel, called 'A Likely Story,' in which he tried—not altogether successfully—to weave an Italian tale of the sixteenth century into the modern life of Chelsea. But the Italian part of the book is told with consummate art, and might almost pass as the work of Bandello or Luigi da Porto.

There was, however, general rejoicing among the readers of De Morgan's novels when he returned to his older and more familiar vein in his second two-volume novel, 'When Ghost meets Ghost,' which appeared early in 1914. The plot of the story turns on the adventures of twin sisters, who are parted by a cruel fate in their youth, and only meet again after interminable vicissitudes and delays, when they are eighty years of age. This time his interest in the tale and the pleasure which he took in elaborating every detail carried him beyond his usual limits, and the story in its original form made up over a thousand pages. When in response to a gentle remonstrance from his publisher he succeeded in cutting



out two hundred pages, he found it absolutely necessary to add another fifty or sixty, 'to fill up the gaps.' But in spite of its great length, much of the book was written in the author's happiest manner, and many of his critics placed it next to 'Joseph Vance' in their estimation.

The letters which he received on this occasion, as he said in his quaint fashion, 'greatly alimented his vanity.' But he noticed that most of his readers referred to 'Joseph Vance' as his best book and to 'Lossie' as their favourite heroine. He confessed that for his part 'Janey' was 'his darling,' and took great pains to explain that she was not to be regarded as a 'pis-aller,' but as the best possible helpmeet for Joseph Vance—the true wife of his soul. One thing which surprised and gratified him extremely was the warm appreciation expressed for his novels by so many of the clergy—'even Canons and Bishops' of the Church of England, 'in spite of all his heresies!' It was in recognition of this kindly attitude that he felt it necessary to introduce a good parson into his novel, 'It Never can Happen Again,' in the person of the Rector, Athelstan Taylor, who refutes the 'ultra-liberal views' expressed by Alfred Challis.

He came to the conclusion that what attracted ecclesiastics of this description in his writings must be his 'immortalism.' As he always insisted, he had a firm faith in an overruling Providence which orders all things well, and in a future life where we shall see and know our lost friends once more.

It is pleasant to know that the success of De Morgan's novels brought him the material rewards which his artistic pottery had failed to command, and better still to feel how thoroughly he enjoyed the fame and prosperity which had at length crowned his labours. He took a child-like pleasure in the letters which reached him from devoted admirers in all parts of the world, and often said that he was quite ashamed of the magnificent sums which he received from American publishers. The popularity of his novels showed no signs of diminishing. Each one was awaited with the same impatience, and in one instance a distinguished statesman who knew that his days were numbered, begged to see advance proofs of the forthcoming novel that was announced in the daily press, in order that he might enjoy this last pleasure before his death.

In November 1910, De Morgan was the guest of honour at a dinner given by the Society of Authors, but his gratification at the compliment thus paid him was considerably damped when he found that he was expected to make a speech! So nervous was



he at the prospect that he would not allow Mrs. De Morgan to be present, lest he should disgrace himself by breaking down. But, although his voice at first sounded a little weak and quavering, he got through the ordeal well, and amused his hearers by a good-humoured allusion to a boycott which his last novel had sustained at the hands of one of the largest circulating libraries, which had rejected it as being improper. This, he suspected, was rather due to the fact that he had outraged the feelings of circulating libraries by venturing to publish a novel in two volumes. But he confessed that he could not help feeling rather hurt at the treatment which he had received, because of the singular respect that he had always felt for libraries, ever since the day, sixty-six years before, when his mother first took him, as a small boy, into Mudie's Library. He still remembered clearly how, as he stood with his chin resting on the counter, he saw a tall gentleman step out from the back of the shop and hand his mother a parcel of books. 'That,' said Mrs. De Morgan, 'was Mr. Mudie.' He never forgot the thrill which the words sent through him.

Long residence in Chelsea had made William De Morgan familiar with its chief landmarks and leading inhabitants. He had known Carlyle and Rossetti, Whistler and William Bell Scott, John Hungerford Pollen and many other celebrities of past days. The historic monuments in the Old Church, and the families whom they commemorate, the Cheynes and Petitts, the Laurences and Danvers, were a theme of which he was never tired. He mourned over the destruction of the old wooden Battersea bridge that figured so often in Whistler's paintings and etchings. He had many stories to tell of the part which it had played in the old life of Chelsea, and of the health-giving properties associated with the structure in the minds of former inhabitants. There was, it appears, a popular superstition among Chelsea folk some fifty years ago that seven currents of air met in the middle span of the bridge. A carpenter who is still living vividly remembers being taken by his mother to stand on the bridge, on a bitterly cold March day, with his six brothers and sisters, who were all suffering from whooping-cough. It must have been a case of kill or cure, but in this instance the good woman's faith seems to have been justified, for all her seven children got over the whooping-cough and grew up hale and hearty.

In spite, however, of his affection for Chelsea and its people, De Morgan never forgot Italy and the Florentine home where he and his wife had spent so many happy seasons. He missed the sun and

the flowers and thought with regret of his friend Spencer Stanhope, whose death had left so great a blank in the English colony at Florence. Often he recalled the painter's lovely home at Villa Nuti, where the De Morgans always spent the week-end, and their pleasant walks up the steep hillside, on radiant April mornings, when Val d'Arno lay below in the first flush of spring loveliness.

One evening towards dusk I happened to meet him in Chelsea, in front of a new Roman church which has been built of recent years in Cheyne Row. The door stood open and we saw the priest within reciting the office of Benediction, the clouds of incense rising heavenwards and the gleam of silver and lighted candles on the altar. 'Ah!' he said, 'I like that, it makes me feel I am at home again!' And then it flashed across him that this church stood on the exact spot where his first pottery kiln had been set up, in the garden of Orange House; and so, as he said, 'it really was his home.'

The sudden outbreak of war, in August 1914, found the indefatigable author busy with a new novel which promised to be both original and entertaining. It was the story of his own recollections of life in Chelsea during the last fifty years, put in the mouth of an old pauper exactly his own age, who was supposed to be living in the workhouse near his home. But, like many other authors, De Morgan found it impossible to go on writing when his whole soul was absorbed in the life and death struggle in which the Empire found itself involved. The new novel was left unfinished, but since a considerable part had been already written, it is to be hoped that both this fragment, and another novel on which he had been for some time engaged, may eventually see the light.

During the next two years and a half, De Morgan thought of little but the war. He followed every step of the campaign by land and by sea, and did his utmost to enlighten public opinion abroad and in the United States. More than this, he devoted a great part of his time to making scientific experiments at the Polytechnic and perfecting new discoveries, which might prove useful in submarine warfare. All his old love for chemistry now revived, and many were the suggestions for saving life and destroying hostile craft which he sent to the Board of Admiralty.

The splendid optimism and youthful enthusiasm which were so marked a feature of his character carried him safely through the darkest days of the last two winters. He took keen interest in an exhibition of his wife's symbolical paintings dealing with

subjects suggested by the war, which was held in Chelsea last spring, and was very proud of the substantial sum which it realised for the English and Italian Red Cross Societies. All through these anxious months his familiar figure was frequently to be seen in the streets of Chelsea. You met him in the morning doing his own marketing and carrying provisions home, and late in the dusk of evening he was constantly to be seen setting out on a rapid walk along the Embankment. Often you caught sight of him stopping at a street corner to exchange greetings with some old inhabitant or engaged in earnest conversation with a soldier in khaki just back from the front. The tall figure was slightly bowed with advancing years, and Time had whitened the locks and beard that were once a rich brown, but the brisk, alert step and clear blue eyes with their frank, kindly glance, were still the same as ever.

The last time I saw him he was singularly bright and hopeful. He had thoroughly enjoyed a short September holiday at Lyme Regis, and was eloquent on the beauty of the Dorset and Devon coast. And he spoke with the utmost confidence of the coming campaign on the Western front next spring. For him there could be no doubt as to the final issue of the struggle. The devil was let loose for a while and all the powers of evil were ranged against us in the battle, but right must conquer in the end, he felt convinced, and the hour of victory, he believed, was not far off. Alas ! he was not destined to see the day to which he looked forward with such serene confidence. A sharp and sudden attack of influenza carried him off after a fortnight's illness, and on the 15th of January he breathed his last. A few days later, a large company of the friends who had known and loved him met in the Old Church, which has played so great a part in the history of Chelsea and is so often mentioned in his books. Here his mortal remains were laid under a violet pall, bright with flowers, while sweet boy-voices sang his last Requiem. Among the mourners were the children and grandchildren of Burne-Jones and the daughter of William Morris. So, with the music and flowers which he had loved, and with familiar faces all around, he passed to his well-earned rest, followed by the love and gratitude of thousands whose lives had been cheered and gladdened by his genius.

JULIA CARTWRIGHT.

UNCONQUERED: AN EPISODE OF 1914.<sup>1</sup>

BY MAUD DIVER.

## CHAPTER X.

Vanish every idle thought,  
 Perish, last of Folly's ways!  
 All that pride of eye hath sought,  
 All that rebel flesh hath wrought,  
 Utterly reduced to naught,  
 How can ye outlive these days?

X.

THAT was how his mother found him when she came in search of him. The lunch-gong had brought no Mark; and no one had seen him, except Maurice, who, from his window, had caught sight of the lovers entering the wood. All the morning she had been secretly anxious. Now she felt certain something was wrong, and telling the others not to wait, she fled out to his favourite haunt, hardly knowing what she expected to find.

He did not hear her till she set foot in the summer-house; and the wild idea smote him—Could it be Bel?

With a start he looked up; and at sight of his face Lady Forsyth's heart stood still.

'My darling Boy, what *has* happened?'

Mark frowned and straightened his shoulders. 'She's chucked me—that's all,' he said in a dazed voice. 'They've poisoned her point of view between them.' His eyes challenged hers. 'Mother, you've been right all along. I suppose—you even foresaw—this!'

'Dear, indeed I didn't.' Her hand closed on the rough wood-work. She so longed to gather him to her heart. 'I was anxious—a little. But I hoped better things of her.'

'So did I. We were a pair of fools, it seems. And there's an end of *that*.' With a gesture he dismissed the subject, and added, almost in his normal voice, 'What about the meeting? Any luck?'

'Yes. People are quite keen. But—you'll hardly feel like speaking.'

'Oh, I'll speak all right. The King's affairs come a long way

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1917, by Mrs. Diver, in the United States of America.

first. I've had enough of false perspectives this morning. I'll probably speak all the better for having—flung in everything.' He sighed. 'Give me to-morrow, Mums, to pull myself together, and I'll do any mortal thing that's required of me. But I can't show up yet—you understand? And it's you that must do the telling—as before!'

A spasm of pain crossed his face and she passed a hand over his hair.

He drew back sharply. 'Oh—not that,' he murmured; then checked himself and tried to smile. 'Sorry. I'm feeling—all raw, Mother. I can't be civil even to you.' He could not tell her why the feel of a woman's hand on his hair was unendurable, and would be, for some time to come.

'I understand, dear,' she said, and turned to go. 'Shall I send anything to the studio?'

He shook his head. 'Later on, perhaps. Dinner time. You might come up yourself.'

'Of course I will.'

And so she left him.

Lunch was nearly over when she got back. They had kept some hot for her; but she hardly touched it.

Briefly, without comment, she told them her news: and escaped with Keith into the study. To him she could speak more freely. He loved Mark like a brother; a good deal more, indeed, than the average brother: and she knew—though neither had spoken of it—that he had shared her distrust of Bel.

But her thoughts and her words were of Mark only as she stood beside the man who so intimately shared their lives, her small hand clenched upon the edge of the high mantelshelf; tears in her eyes; but none in her voice.

'He faces trouble so exactly like his father,' she said, when she had told him of Mark's refusal to postpone the meeting. 'But Richard's phlegm went deeper. Mark, underneath, has all my terrible sensibility; though he won't let me see it except accidentally.'

Keith said nothing. He was not given to superfluous comment; and on the whole she found his silences more satisfactory than other people's talk. He knew she was more or less thinking aloud. She was not even looking at him, but at a full-length photograph of her husband—a powerful figure of a man.

'It's so strange,' she went on in the same subdued tone. 'I

sometimes see Richard's very self looking at me out of Mark's eyes. When the look comes I seem actually to feel him there. Twice this morning I've seen it. Once when Mark spoke of war and again when he spoke of—that wretched girl. Oh Keith—I hate her!’

The low voice broke unmistakably; and she bowed her forehead on the back of her hand.

Macnair stood looking at her, his keen eyes clouded with tenderness. A moment he seemed to hesitate, then deliberately, he laid his hand on her shoulder. ‘Helen, don't break your heart over it,’ he said. ‘We men pull through these things: and Mark is made of sterner stuff, if I know him, than to let a girl like Miss Alison smash him up for good. More likely to do that by marrying him than by leaving him. There's a crumb of consolation for you!’

She raised her head now and smiled at him through tears that were not allowed to fall.

‘If there is such a crumb anywhere, trust you to find it! What a blessing you are to us, Keith!’ As his hand slipped from her shoulder she caught and held it a minute. Then her thoughts went back to her son. ‘I wonder—will he ever have eyes for Sheila again, after this?’

‘More likely after this than before. Sheila's a born mother-woman, a little Sister of Compassion. And we men are such fools, that we're very apt to overlook the beauty of that type till we've suffered a few hard knocks from the other sort. The revulsion from that type, when it comes, is curiously complete. But it takes time. As for our Sheila, whether she would have him, after this, is another matter.’

Helen sighed. ‘I can't forgive Maurice yet,’ she said. ‘I wonder if he'll enlist?’ And their talk slid back to the one all-absorbing subject—the War.

As for Mark, he spent that interminable afternoon tramping endlessly, aimlessly over the hills; hoping by the mechanical motion to deaden thought and ease the pain within. Where all memory was intolerable, it hurt him most to recall how cruelly she had tempted him by tone and touch; as it were bribing him to be false to his own convictions. The whole thing bewildered almost as much as it hurt him. There were moments when he came near to hating her; proof, though he did not realise it, that the love she evoked was strongly tainted with baser metal.

And all the while Bobs, the incurably faithful, trotted to heel

or gambolled coquettishly under his master's eyes without eliciting a word or caress.

Hunger and lengthening shadows drew him back at last to the home he loved yet now acutely desired to avoid. She had poisoned even that. Yet how his heart ached for her! How the unregenerate blood in his veins craved the touch of her lips and hands!

He reached his study without encountering anything more human than a stray housemaid; and there the first thing he lighted on was his own tender and beautiful little Study of Contemplation. Standing just inside the door, he feasted his eyes on the soft, still face, the small head with its close-fitting cap of hair and the long-limbed grace of her figure. Then rage flamed in him. He felt like smashing the thing with a hammer and flinging away the pieces as he had flung away her ring. A mere pulse-beat of hesitation saved him and the artist prevailed over the man. He could not murder the work of his hands. Later on, he would give it to Maurice to wean him from the sin of impressionism. Meanwhile, he lifted it as tenderly as he would have touched the original, put it away in a corner cupboard and turned the key.

He had scarcely done so when he heard his mother outside.

'Open the door, dear,' she said. 'My hands are full.'

He opened it and relieved her of a tray set out with appetising food and wine.

'Stunning of you, Mums,' he said. 'I'm hungry.'

To her delight he ate everything and drank three glasses of wine, while they discussed ways and means; the money they could realise, the men they could raise for England in this most critical hour of her destiny. Except for the absence of laughter and badinage in their talk, it was as if nothing abnormal had happened. But Lady Forsyth did not fail to note the disappearance of his terra-cotta treasure; and she was sinful enough to hope it had been destroyed.

She stayed more than half an hour and left him with a fervent 'God bless you!' But this time she attempted no caress. She understood.

Next morning, after breakfast, she lingered in her turret room, wondering what he would do with himself, hoping he would come and let her know. He did come; and her heart ached at the tired look in his eyes.

'I'm going to take the "Watersprite" up the loch, Mums,' he told her. 'And I'll be away all day. Grant has stocked her well, so



I shan't starve. Don't be an idiot if I'm late and go imagining I've drowned myself. At a time like this, a man's life is not his own to chuck away. Besides, I'm not the sort. And—there happens to be you,' he added with a travesty of a smile. 'On the whole I'd sooner have the honour of being shot by the Germans—'

'Mark—don't!' She drew in a sharp breath.

'Sorry, Mums. But it's true. By the way, as I'm wasting some valuable time hadn't we better stay over Sunday?'

'That *would* make things easier,' she admitted. 'But I thought—you'd rather get away soon.'

'My dear Mother, don't fash yourself with fancies. If it'll ease things, we'll jolly well stay. I don't care a damn.'

The spark of irritation was purely refreshing: and he never apologised to her for 'language' accidental or otherwise. So complete was the comrade spirit between them that he prided himself on his habit of speaking to her straightly as man to man. More than once, in University days, he had filled some prospective visitor with envy by the casual remark: 'Don't be alarmed if you hear me scrapping with my Mother. She's the right sort. I can talk to her just exactly as I talk to you.'

Now, in answer to his outburst, she said quietly: 'Very well, Monday. I'll tell the others.'

'That's all right. And don't you be a fool about me!'

So he left her and she did her best to obey him; but the faint consolation that his trouble brought him nearer to herself was obliterated by her acute consciousness of his hidden pain and resentment against the cause of it.

That grey, weary Thursday seemed as if it would never pass. Clouds had rolled up out of the West. Scudding showers lashed the loch; and through them she could picture Mark driving the little steam-yacht he loved. Long after sunset he came back wet to the skin; but looking, on the whole, more like himself. He had fought and conquered something out there in the rain and wind. But he spent what remained of the evening in his studio as before.

On Friday evening, when they were gathered in the square hall waiting to start, he strode casually down stairs and nodded his greetings as if he had merely been away for a couple of nights. He had prepared a speech, he said, that ought to make the men of Ardmuir sit up to some purpose: and Keith, watching the little incident from the study threshold, murmured: 'Well done, old boy!'

A second car had been ordered to accommodate the party; and



while they made ready, Mark was left momentarily alone with Sheila in the hall.

Then she took courage and looked up at him.

'Mark—I'm so sorry,' she whispered. 'I may say that much, mayn't I?'

For a second he held her gaze. Then: 'You may say anything you please,' he answered, 'when you look like that! Truth is,' he paused, 'she's never been taught to see things the right way. It was just—that one couldn't make her understand.'

'Poor Bel! She must be very unhappy.'

'Bel—unhappy!' His astonishment was manifest. But then—Sheila had not seen the look in her eyes. 'I doubt it,' he added with a touch of bitterness.

'I don't,' the soft voice persisted. 'She's bound to be—if she cares.'

'But if she cared, how *could* she—?'

The note of pain in his voice gave her still more courage.

'You said—she didn't understand, and that poisons everything.'

Touched to the heart he said impulsively 'Sheila, what a wise little Mouse you are!'

It was his old nickname for her and she drew in a quick breath. 'Not so very! But I do know—about caring.'

'The first best knowledge surely,' he said: then Keith appeared and bade them hurry up.

But her eyes, shining on him through tears, and her words that gave him a new point of view lingered in his memory. Odd how readily he could speak of Bel to Sheila, how hardly to his mother, with whom he could talk of everything in earth or heaven. And surely no one but Sheila could have been inspired to couple sympathy for himself with so tender and delicate a plea for Bel. If she were right, if Bel were really suffering, the door of hope might still be ajar. Meantime there was his speech; for which he had made comprehensive notes; there were convictions and appeals that he must drive home to the hearts of his hearers; and while he sat smoking in silence beside Keith—who drove the car—words full of vigour and fire came crowding into his brain—

When at length he stood on the platform waiting for his clamorous welcome to subside, the flame of his own conviction burnt away all nervousness, all dread of failure; and for half an hour he spoke as none had imagined he could speak, himself least of all.

'First rate,' Keith said quietly as he sat down amid a storm of cheers.

'Heaven knows how I did it!' he answered under cover of the noise. 'Wish I could bolt now.'

But the Provost had risen and was praising him to his face; a far worse ordeal than the one he had so triumphantly weathered. The recruiting result, in figures, was not sensational; but Ardmuir was obviously impressed. It begged leave to distribute Sir Mark's 'great recruiting speech' as a leaflet; and Sir Mark, privately overwhelmed, gave gracious consent, with the air of one who made brilliant speeches as easily as he ate his breakfast.

'Really, old boy, you ought to stand for Parliament,' Keith said as they drove home. 'If that speech of yours is well distributed, the men will soon be tumbling in. One has to give them time up here. The Radical spirit is so strong in our beloved country.'

'And the beauty of it is that the bulk of 'em, if they only knew it, remain Radicals just *because* they're so conservative!' Mark retorted with a flash of his mother's humour. 'But Parliament—no thanks; not yet awhile.'

Saturday was given over to rounding up his own men and business connected with his mother's small estate. That evening he conquered, not without difficulty, a temptation to stroll down into the village and discover whether the Rowans was yet empty of its treasure; and when the last post came in he knew.

Glancing through half a dozen envelopes, he came suddenly on Bel's handwriting. His mother, who was watching him, saw, without appearing to see, that he pocketed all his letters unopened and, after a reasonable interval, rose and left the room. It was easy to guess what had happened; and she rated herself for the horrid sinking at her heart. She could not sleep till she knew: but as Mark did not reappear, she went up early and, in passing, knocked at his door.

'Good-night, dear,' she said.

He opened it and stood before her—transfigured.

'Come along in, Mums.' Drawing her forward he closed the door behind her. 'Read that!'

He thrust a faintly scented sheet of note-paper into her hand, and she obeyed.

Bel's communication was brief, moving, and very much to the point.

'Are you generous enough to forgive me—and come to me?' she wrote without preamble. 'If you can keep it up—I *can't*.'

I saw and heard you at Ardmuir. You are *brave*. As for me, I'm bitterly sorry and ashamed. I hate it all still. But if you wish it, I am yours—unconditionally, BEL. I shall be alone here after 10.30. I can't face Inverairg.'

Lady Forsyth had to read that note more than once before she could feel sure of her voice. To her it seemed studied, consciously written for effect: and the writing itself was equally studied, with the same touch of hardness in it that showed in the level line of eyelids and brows.

'Well?' Mark was growing impatient.

'You *can* forgive her?' she asked, looking steadily up at him.

'Of course I can. And you must too. She's sorry. She—cares. Isn't that enough for anyone?'

'But she's not convinced.'

'I'll convince her, in time. I hope she'll come south with us to-morrow.'

Lady Forsyth drew in her lips and at once his hands came down on her shoulders.

'Look here, Mums, I *won't* have you antagonising and doubting her any more—after this. It spoils everything. You might make an effort if only for my sake. It's beyond belief getting her back; and your attitude's the only flaw in my happiness. Has been all along.'

She was silent a minute, then she put her two hands on his breast. 'Dear, I will make an effort for your sake. I refuse to be the flaw in your happiness! It's a degrading position for a mother.'

He stooped and kissed her for the first time since Wednesday morning. 'Bless you!' he said. 'Good-night.'

Alone in her room, confronting this new, unwelcome development, she realised how, through all the pain of his grief, she had been upheld by the secret conviction that his loss was gain; some day he would know it. Now the old miserable uncertainty was nagging at her afresh. In her heart, she distrusted the sincerity of the whole incident. But she had given her word to Mark, and Bel should have the benefit of all the doubts in creation.

Mark's watch was three minutes short of the half-hour when he stood outside the square grey house perched on the hillside above the road. A white curtain fluttered; and a glimpse of Bel's face signified that the coast was clear.

When he entered the homely sitting-room and closed the door

she did not run to meet him as a simpler woman would have done. She remained standing near the mantelpiece on the farther side of the square table, smiling her cool provocative smile.

'Mark!' she said softly. 'I've been wondering and wondering would you really come?'

By that time the square table was no longer between them and Mark was holding her as if he could never let her go.

'Would you have broken your heart, if I hadn't?' he asked at last.

'Very nearly!' she admitted, with the slowest possible lift of her lashes.

'But, Bel—if you cared, how *could* you pull it through? How could you look at me with your eyes like bits of glass?'

'You forget,' she said, 'I can act. It was because—I cared so much; because I couldn't bear the idea of your taking part in that horror out there; and because you were so obstinate, that in the end I put on the strongest screw I could think of—and it wasn't so strong as I supposed. That's the inner history of the last three days.'

He regarded her searchingly, taking it all in. 'Women are queer things,' he said. 'Did you really suppose I'd capitulate—under the screw?'

'I half hoped so—till I heard your speech. Then I began to see that I'd never known the real Mark: only Bel's lover.'

'And—did you approve of the real Mark?'

She laughed and kissed him.

'Honestly, I found him rather alarming. Too big altogether for a mere Bel. But I wanted him more than ever. And now I know he's still mine, I can't let him go!'

For Mark there was only one flaw in those first raptures of reunion: and for that flaw his mother was unwittingly responsible. Nothing would induce Bel to come up to Inverraig or to travel south with the Forsyths on Monday.

'I can't face them yet awhile,' she persisted, 'specially your Mother. She won't easily forgive me for hurting you so. No real mother could. Besides, she was probably thanking her stars for your escape; and now I've turned up again, like a bad penny!'

'Bel!'

But she laid her hand upon his lips.

'Hush and listen to me. It wouldn't be fair on Harry either; stranding her with those two. In ten days, we can both come

south and a regenerate Bel can dare to pay you a visit. Their minds will be full of such big terrible things by then that they'll take me for granted. As for you—the real Mark will be so swamped with his responsibilities that there would be no time for love-making, even if I came.'

In the end he was forced to admit that she was right. Three days of fighting himself had not been without a steadying effect on his impatient spirit: and so the matter was settled.

Rain and wind had ceased. They spent all the afternoon and evening together on the water; and on Monday the Forsyth party travelled down to Wynchcombe Friars.

At no time could Lady Forsyth leave Inveraig without a pang: and never had it been sharper than on that 10th of August with the glory and anguish of Belgium's gallant stand beating on her brain, and the poignant question at her heart—when, and in what circumstances, would they four see that grey rugged house and the lochs and hills of Scotland again?

## CHAPTER XI.

WYNCHCOMBE FRIARS was a singularly perfect relic of the Tudor period. It rambled, it blossomed into irrelevant gables, it took you to its heart. The lordly spaciousness of an eighteenth-century mansion seemed dull, featureless, by contrast with its individuality, its friendly charm. And of all its beautiful old rooms was none more individual than Mark's studio, with its oak-panelled walls, deep window-seats and leaded casements that opened upon the sea of pinetops he had described to Bel. For him and his mother, it was the soul of the house; and in nothing was their intimacy more evident than in the fact that this, his holy of holies, was hers also. A certain square bay window that caught the last of the sun upon the pines held her armchair of dull blue brocade, her book-case and elbow table. Blue prevailed also in the window-seats, the casement curtains and the Turkish rugs on the polished floor.

The studio itself contained little beyond Mark's paraphernalia, his writing-table and a few pieces of priceless old furniture. The spirit of Michael Angelo pervaded the place:—models of his statues and groups, sepia studies by Mark from the great friezes; and a portrait of the Florentine's rugged head occupied the place of

honour above the mantelpiece. The blue-tiled fireplace beneath was flanked by Mark's first two essays in statuary: symbolic figures of Triumph and Defeat. Triumph, a splendid nude, stood poised upon a rock; arms uplifted, head flung back. Defeat, a fallen Lucifer, still sullenly defiant, leaned upon his battered sword; a figure of sombre strength. The Viking, who accompanied Mark on his moves, was set in a dark oak niche that served for frame and threw him into strong relief.

Still, beneath all the beauty and friendliness of the room, there lurked the same unobtrusively ascetic note that had been more marked in the simpler studio at Inverraig.

So at least thought Maurice Lenox, who lounged smoking in an armchair, wondering, secretly, how Mark could bring himself to leave it all, patriotism or no. He, personally, had found it quite enough of a wrench to shut up his modest rooms in Chelsea—till when? God, or the devil, alone could tell.

He had gone straight from Inverraig to his home in Surrey, wondering what possible use there could be for such as he in this terrible *galère*:—he, who had small knowledge of firearms and so heartily detested taking life that he could not even find pleasure in fishing. Mark had suggested enlisting in the Artists' Rifles: a suggestion since confirmed by Sir Eldred Lenox, with a blunt admonition to look sharp about it. Sir Nevil Sinclair, of Bramleigh Beeches, commanded them. He would send the boy's name up for a commission the moment he was reasonably fit for it: and on the whole Maurice found it a relief to have the question of choice taken out of his hands. He had stipulated for a few days of his promised visit to Wynchcombe Friars, before taking the plunge; and those few days—with Macnair for the only other guest—had laid the foundation of a genuine friendship with Forsyth, whose finer qualities shone out notably in this hour of crisis.

Whereas at Inverraig he had at times seemed selfish and a trifle dictatorial, here, as responsible landowner, his mastery and force of character showed in a new light. And as for selfishness—his whole mind seemed set upon the welfare of his people and his place in the coming time of stress. Now, at the very moment when he was most needed, and most longed to be on the spot, he was cheerfully and actively engaged in transferring the reins of government into other hands. To Maurice—a man of random moods and many points of view—such strength and singleness of purpose seemed enviable as it was admirable; and the fact that Forsyth had

remained unshaken even by Miss Alison's defection had made a deep impression on the lighter nature of his friend. Since then, he had learnt a good deal more, not only of Sir Mark in a fresh manifestation, but of England's greatest asset—sadly misprized in a democratic age—the hereditary lords of the land.

To-day his brief respite was over.

At the moment, he and Mark had effected their escape from the infliction of war-talk, as perpetrated by Mrs. Melrose and the Vicar's wife, at the tea-table on the terrace. Sir Mark's sudden engagement, by the way, had been a severe shock to Mrs. Melrose, who suspected that Sheila must have played her cards remarkably ill. But that, after all, was how one might expect her to play cards of any worldly value. She was her Melrose grandmother all over. Not a drop of Burlington blood in her veins. But the war had dwarfed that personal disappointment: and the good lady was brimming with benevolent schemes for herself and the whole neighbourhood.

Meantime the Vicar's wife held the field. Having come in quest of a subscription, she had stayed to murmur decorous and very premature lamentations over the undesirable features of billeting and of the Territorial camps: the sort of thing that reduced Lady Forsyth to speechless exasperation. Mark, divided between sympathy and amusement, had watched her holding herself in, till the assertive voice of Mrs. Melrose created a diversion and dubious murmurs were drowned in a flood of propositions for the local housing of Belgians and the conversion of Wendover Court into a luxurious hospital for officers.

'You, Lady Forsyth, with this heavenly place, ought to specialise on convalescents or nerve-cases'—Mrs. Melrose dearly loved making other people's plans—'If we all take a *distinctive* line, there'll be no muddle or overlapping. And of course *dear* little Lady Sinclair will devote herself to the Indians—when they come.'

Privately Helen reflected that if her neighbours continued so to afflict her, the first nerve-case for Wynchcombe Friars would be its own mistress.

It was at this point that Mark had given up waiting for the Sinclairs. Not even the presence of Sheila—who had come over with her mother and was staying on to discuss 'War plans'—could detain him, once Mrs. Melrose held the field. Basely deserting Lady Forsyth he left word that Sir Nevil, if he should turn up, would be very welcome in the studio.



Now, while Maurice lounged and reflected, he sat at his littered writing-table, a pipe between his teeth, two deep furrows in his forehead. Beyond that littered table the room held no other signs of work. Easel and modelling pedestal stood empty. A woeful tidiness prevailed, and Mark himself looked older, Maurice thought. Small wonder, seeing all that he must forgo at a stroke when his name appeared in the 'Gazette.'

So, throughout Great Britain, in the same casual unemotional fashion, men of every grade were making the supreme sacrifice, cheerfully putting behind them all that made life worth living—possessions, talents, hardly earned distinction, cherished hopes and still more cherished homes. No doubt many of them, like Maurice, privately rebelled; but they, too, were carried forward by the infection of brave example, if by no higher motive. In Mark's company, Maurice had felt that infection strongly: but on this his last evening of freedom the artist in him raged afresh against the hideousness and waste and cruelty of modern war.

For ten minutes Mark had been smoking steadily and silently. He had a difficult letter on his mind. Maurice, who had the horrors of Tirlmont on his nerves, felt suddenly impelled to more candid speech than he had hitherto indulged in, lest he be misjudged.

'I don't know what your private feelings are, Forsyth,' he plunged boldly; and Mark started as if he had been waked from a dream. 'But the more I look at this business of enlisting and going out to slaughter Germans—not to mention the chance of their returning the compliment—the more heartily I hate the whole thing. It's nothing so simple as mere funk. And it's not that I'm shirking—you understand.'

'Oh, yes. I understand,' Mark rejoined, setting his teeth on the stem of his pipe.

But he did not seem disposed to enlarge on his understanding of his private feelings; and Maurice, whose mixed emotions were clamouring for expression, went on: 'Mere funk would at least give one something to tackle and overcome. It's this cursed inferno going on inside one's head that does the damage. And the beastly thing seems quite independent of one's thoughts or attention. Just keeps on automatically at the back of my brain. Even when I'm reading or talking, I can hear those infernal guns and shells. I can see the mangled fragments that once were men—the wounds—the blood—the slopes of the Liège forts—'

'Damn you! Shut up!' Mark leaned forward suddenly, a



spark of anger in his eyes. 'D'you suppose you're the only one that's plagued with an imagination?'

Maurice sighed.

'Sorry, old chap,' he said, disappointed, but contrite. 'It's a relief all the same. And I thought—you understood—'

'Of course I do: a long sight too well.' Mark's tone was gentler now. 'If it's relief you're after, you'll get that most effectively by going out yourself; seeing things with your actual eyes: doing things with your actual hands that'll give you no time for cinematographs in your head. You can thank your stars you're a *man*. It's the women given that way who'll have the devil's own time of it. My mother's one, worse luck; and it'll come hard on her—when I'm gone.'

Maurice ventured no comment on a subject so poignantly intimate as Lady Forsyth's anxiety for her one remaining son; nor did Mark seem to expect any. He took a few pulls at his pipe, then reverted to generalities.

'Don't write me down an unfeeling brute, Maurice,' he said with his friendly smile. 'War's the roughest game on earth and we've got to be a bit rough with ourselves if we're to play it to any purpose. I'm horribly well aware that the "sorrowful great gift of imagination" is the very deuce on these occasions. A shade less of it in us, who have to do the killing, and a shade more of it in our Westminster Olympians—who have to do the foreseeing and forestalling—would be a pleasanter business for ourselves and a better look-out for the country. They're an agile crew with their tongues; and if words were bullets, we might be in Berlin the week after next! Personally, I'd like to see most of 'em scrapped "for the duration of the war." Kitchener paramount, with a picked Council, would pull us through in half the time. But that's not my business nor yours. It's for us to play up all we can; thank God for one real Man, and not waste our precious energies in grumbling. There's a sermon for you. And you brought it on yourself!'

Maurice rose, flung away his cigarette end, and strolled down the length of the room and back.

'It's done me a power of good being here,' he said, coming to a standstill by the mantelpiece and contemplating Mark's 'Triumph.' 'You're a man as well as an artist, Forsyth; and the bulk of us are not; I, personally, am cursed with too much of Uncle Michael in my composition.'

Mark laughed.

'Confound your Uncle Michael! You run along and enlist and kill every German you can lay hands to and your composition will take care of itself. A wee bit stiffening's all you want; and a wee bit taste of red-hot reality will put some backbone into your studio-bred art, that ennobles nothing and nobody and doesn't even want to make itself understood. It's just on the cards that this war—when we're through with it—may give us an altogether saner and more robust revival of art that will spring naturally from a more robust conception of life: an art that will genuinely reflect the spirit of the age, as Michael Angelo reflects the Renaissance. Our present age of machinery and money-getting has precious little spirit to reflect. No collective convictions. Practically no faith, except in success. Consequently life has no vital use for art: and we're ousted by the cinematograph. A few, like myself and Sinclair, still hang on to beauty and the classics. The rest, like the bulk of your advanced friends, say "Ugliness, be thou my beauty" and proceed to make a little hell of their own in the Grafton Galleries! Just at present, Maurice, the mere artist is the most superfluous creature on God's earth. . . .'

He suddenly laughed and checked himself. 'Off on my hobby-horse again! Why the deuce don't you chuck a book at me, old chap? Too much spouting at these recruiting shows will make me an infliction to my friends. Ah—there goes Mrs. Melrose! Joy for Mother! Likewise the devout Mrs. Clutterbuck, who thinks to advertise her own virtue by maligning better folk than herself. Come on down. We'll get the tail-end of tea and the poor dears will need cheering up.'

They found the poor dears in very fair spirits—considering. Helen was delighted at recapturing Sheila; and the girl herself made no secret of her distaste for the restless superficial activities of her own home. A telegram from Sir Nevil Sinclair explained his non-appearance and begged Mark not to fail him at the Bramleigh meeting next day. Then, tea being removed and the others dispersed, Mark found himself alone with Sheila, whom he had scarcely seen since the day of Bel's regeneration.

'It's good to get you back again, Mouse,' he said, with brotherly directness: and as she merely smiled without looking up, he allowed his eyes to linger on her face. 'But I'm not sure I approve of the massage plan, specially if it means careering off to France with Miss Videlle.'

Sheila hesitated. 'I thought—if you married—there might be Bel. But if Mums really needs me, I'd leave anything, anyone . . . for her. She knows that.' The girl's voice throbbled with feeling and a faint colour showed in her cheeks. 'I'm very doubtful, though, whether she could or would stay here long—without you.'

Mark started and frowned.

'She must! She'll be safe here; and there's no end of useful work for her on the spot. All the same—' he paused, looking deep into the heart of the wood, at pine-stems rosy with shafts of light. 'I believe you know best. She won't stop. She'd break her heart. War comes cruel hard on the women.'

Sheila said nothing: but the set of her lips showed a faint line of strain that he had not noticed before. 'Come for a quarter-deck prow with me, Mouse,' he said.

They paced the wide-flagged terrace, veined with moss, till near dinner-time; and only at the last did Mark speak the thought uppermost in his mind. They had reached the far end when he came to a standstill and faced her squarely.

'Sheila—it goes against the grain asking favours for Bel, even of you and Mother; but you were such a brick before; and now—it's a bit of an ordeal for her facing you all after—what happened up there. Otherwise she'd have been here sooner. Of course I'll make her speak to Mums straight away, which may clear the air, between them. But I want you all to be ever so kind and not let her feel a shadow of awkwardness. Just pick up the threads again as if nothing had happened. Will you—for my sake?'

Sheila was leaning now against the balustrade, her hands pressed palm downwards on the stone work.

'Yes, Mark,' she said in an odd, contained voice, 'I'll do anything I can for your sake. But in my heart—' she suddenly looked up at him with her clear honest eyes, 'I can't forgive her—ever!'

'You?'

His surprise brought the blood to her cheeks. 'But when it happened you were so—understanding. It was you who took the edge off my bitterness.'

'Because then—I didn't understand,' Sheila explained with difficulty. 'I thought she had really lost you through her own blindness; and—I was sorry for her. But afterwards, one couldn't help suspecting it was all . . . that perhaps she was simply . . . putting on the screw.'

'She admitted as much,' he said, looking away across the rose garden.

'Mark! How *could* she?' Her low tone vibrated like a smitten harp-string.

'That's the mystery to a masculine brain. It hurt—considerably. But it seems women do these things.'

Sheila checked a natural impulse to repudiate the sweeping assertion. She saw him deliberately erecting a screen for Bel, at the expense of others; but she had already been candid enough, and she would not permit herself to insinuate disparagement.

Her enigmatical silence urged Mark to add: 'Bel's had her share of unhappiness, anyhow. She didn't enjoy those three days much more than I did and she's lost more than a week down here. So just be good to her, you deceptive little bit of adamant—and I'll bless you from my heart.'

'That's bribery!' Sheila said laughing, and straightening her shoulders. 'I don't take payment for my services. But it's time to go and dress for dinner!'

As they strolled back to the house she caught herself reflecting quite philosophically on the impunity with which the Bels of this world may steal horses, while their less privileged sisters dare not cast a glance over the hedge.

But in spite of her excuse about dressing for dinner, she seemed in no such hurry after all. A sudden longing came over her to see the studio, to sit alone for a few minutes in that shrine of blessed memories: and, having seen Mark safely vanish into his bedroom, she made bold to venture in.

Sinking into Lady Forsyth's armchair, she let the crowding memories sweep through her brain, while her eyes ranged from picture to picture, from statue to statue, as it were learning them by heart, because in future the right of entry she so prized would belong to another. For her, Mark and his art were one and indivisible; and, by an unerring instinct, she dreaded the effect of Bel's demoralising influence on both.

Dearly she loved the virile figure of Triumph; more dearly still, the Viking. Him, she saw and felt as Mark had hoped that Bel might see and feel him. She had been at Wynchcombe Friars during those wonderful days when he came to life under Mark's hands; and in her private heart she saw him as the symbol of his creator's unquenchable spirit.

In all these children of his hand and brain, she found the quint-

essence of the man, and it was her instinct to seek the essence of things.

Mark himself, without and within, was all that she would have a man be—she, who seemed fated to attract only the ‘poor things’ of earth. Since Ailsa’s death and his return from Europe, she had worshipped him, with the still intensity of her northern nature. So felicitous had been their relation, and she so young, so happy in a home atmosphere the very antithesis of her own, that no after-thought had troubled her unclouded content.

For this reason, she had been able to accept, loyally, uncritically, his sudden and bewildering infatuation for a girl obviously unworthy of him; an infatuation that could survive even his knowledge of the motive which had prompted Bel to such unsparing use of her power. Entirely one with him in spirit, she could not choose but will what he willed: and conviction that Bel honestly loved him had mitigated the pain of her own hidden disappointment in him.

But now even that faint consolation was gone: and here, where associations were more intimate than at Inverraig, the shock to her belief in him seemed infinitely harder to bear. Here the question forced itself upon her—how *could* he, being what he was?

And his fresh appeal on behalf of Bel had badly shaken her innate capacity for acceptance.

Because of that appeal—which would also be made to the others—this girl, who had so cruelly tormented him for her own ends, must not be allowed to suffer a twinge of the discomfort she so richly deserved. For the first time, Sheila was goaded almost to the point of rebellion. For the first time her will was at odds with his: and it hurt more than she chose to admit. From a child she had invented her own private code of courage that never allowed her to say ‘I can’t bear it.’ And she would not say it now.

She would do what he asked, under protest, because he asked it. Her attitude, she was convinced, would matter nothing to Bel, who obviously looked down on her, from the attitude of her twenty-nine years, with a mild good-humoured contempt. But it would matter greatly to Mark;—and that sufficed.

She rose at last and wandered round the beloved room. Before the Viking she stood a long while, trying to draw the valiant soul of him into her own soul: then she went reluctantly out.

As she closed the door behind her, Mark opened his own and smilingly confronted her. ‘Hullo! Is that the way you dress for dinner?’

She coloured a little under his gaze.

'I couldn't resist going in—just to greet them all.'

'Well—you might have let me come too! Are they such very special friends?'

'A part of me—almost,' she said very low. 'I've known most of them—haven't I?—ever since they were born.'

Then she went quickly down the passage; and for several seconds Mark stood looking after her. The sudden softening of his whole face, could she have seen it, would have been balm to her heart.

## CHAPTER XII.

The heavens such grace did lend her  
That she might admired be.

SHAKESPEARE.

NEXT morning early, Mark drove Maurice to the main line station, despatched him with a final volley of chaff, and proceeded patiently to tramp the lane outside till the down train should bring him the desire of his eyes. From the station-master he learnt that 'she' might be anything from twenty minutes to two hours late. Yesterday five specials had run through, packed with horses and men, and there would be more to-night.

'Jolly for they Germans, sir!' he added with a jovial wink. 'They *do* say now that the British Army will be keeping Christmas in Berlin!'

'And on the other side they say the Kaiser will keep it in London,' Mark answered him. 'Best leave fairy tales to the Germans. It's their line!'

And he retired to commune with his own heart in the lane.

The train gave him ample time to lose patience and recapture it; and the longer he waited, the brighter grew the halo round Bel's golden head. Idealist as he was, in art and life, he could not choose but idealise the woman he loved: if, indeed, he were not rather in love with a phantom of his own brain, who wore the appearance and spoke with the voice of Bel. During the last ten days, while his conscious mind had been absorbed in things practical, the subconscious, unoccupied artist in him had been sedulously gilding her halo; and as for that bewildering jar in Scotland, he had so completely credited her with his own sensitiveness on the subject, that his one wish was to make her forget it had ever been.

He had shrunk even from asking her to speak of it to his mother; and had made the request in his last letter, rather than spring an unpleasantness on her by way of greeting.

And now—all he craved was herself. Her letters were not the same thing at all. Clever, affectionate and often amusing, they seemed just to miss something that, for him, was the secret of her charm. In them the slightly studied effect of her whole attitude to life seemed more definitely artificial; and after reading them, a troubled uncertainty was apt to pervade his mind. But sight and touch of her would cure all such lover's folly—

Ah—the whistle at last!

He reached the platform as the train drew up, and there emerged from a distant carriage the tall, unmistakable figure in a bluish coat and skirt and close-fitting hat. About midway down the platform they met and clasped hands. She coloured a little when their eyes met; but they merely talked of luggage and the lateness of the train.

It is a common experience, that first, faint shock of actual meeting after keen anticipation; and in these two it waked the undersense that, although they had taken the most hazardous step in life, they were still comparative strangers. In some vague way they seemed to have lost touch; to have become suddenly shy of each other—the man more so than the girl.

Shy or no, she was contented, utterly, to be sitting there beside him in the August sunlight, speeding between stretches of ripe cornland; between purple sweeps of heather, when they climbed a ridge; and on through rolling open country where the earlier trees showed a yellow leaf or two, and the oaks were still sunset-tinted with their second blossoming. England, relying serenely upon her grey ghosts of the North Sea, lay dozing in the high noon of the year, while little Belgium, like another Kate Barlass, thrust her arm through the bolt that the murderers might be stayed were it only for a moment. A Territorial Camp, an occasional motor decked with flags, a group of khaki figures resting in the shade—these were the sole reminders of that invisible horror across the Channel, that for Bel was no more than the shadow of a shadow, though the cloud of it overhung her own life and sat visibly upon her lover's brow.

Every now and then she took stock of him under her eyelids, from his rough motor-cap and his sensitive mouth, safe-guarded by that uncompromising chin, to the lean, strong fingers controlling



the machine. A woman could safely entrust her destiny to that mouth and those hands, though she might wish, incidentally, that he would take a less exaggerated view of this singularly inopportune war. It was just her luck that it should have been timed to spoil the most promising 'phase' of her life. If only Mark's admirable virility were tempered by a touch of Rex Maitland's intelligent common sense, matters would be so much easier and pleasanter all round. And the coming interview with Lady Forsyth was a nuisance, to put it mildly: but still——

'Have I given you time to get through the worst of your troublesome affairs?' she asked after an interchange of commonplaces that led nowhere. 'I'm hoping for a clear field as the reward of my lost week.'

He gave her a contrite glance.

'I wish it were clearer. Russell, my land-agent, has played up like a Trojan. But the wood seems to thicken as one goes on. And to-day I'm booked for a recruiting show at Bramleigh. No getting out of it. Sir Nevil Sinclair—the artist, you know—said I *must* manage to placate you somehow. So please *be* placated and save me the managing!'

Down went the corners of her mouth. 'Our first day! And not even Mr. Lenox to play with.'

'Won't Sheila do?'

'As a substitute for *you*? Mark, your modesty is incredible! Is she with you still?'

'She came back yesterday.'

'And Mr. Macnair?'

'Yes.'

'Are they part of your permanent family, those two?'

'More or less. People just accrue to Mums. Are you placated now—Queen of Wynchcombe Friars?'

She laid gloved finger-tips on his knee.

'I'm trying to be. I vowed a vow to be heavenly good this time, to make up for. . . .'

His hand closed on hers.

'That's over and done with,' he said. 'I'm sorry—even about Mother. But it seemed only fair. I'll take you to her straight—'

'I'd prefer half an hour first with her son—not in a motor on the open road! Darling, give me time to feel more at home.'

His eyes sought hers. 'I'm agreeable. We'll stop at the

gate and go up through the wood. I can fetch the car afterwards. No superfluous attendants these days !'

On a cushion of moss in the cool of the pine-wood, they recaptured the atmosphere of Scotland and the little cloud of estrangement melted away. Mark, who had keenly felt the momentary jar, was the more relieved.

'Now, my darling girl, time's up,' he said; reluctant, but inflexible, 'Mother will be picturing us wrecked on the road, and sending poor old Keith to pick up the pieces! Come.'

At that, she knelt upright, and, with a charmingly tender air of proprietorship, passed her hands over his head, bringing them to rest on his shoulders. 'I'm glad I've found you again,' she said. 'That strange man at the station rather alarmed me.'

'You knew how to conjure him away, you witch!' he answered, stopping her lips with a kiss.

She accepted the kiss, but not his tacit dismissal of the subject. For her, a new sensation not analysed was a sensation wasted.

'I suppose it was that things hadn't time to crystallise properly after the break,' she went on, twisting a button between her finger and thumb. 'I hope the War Office will be merciful and allow us a good spell this time. Separations are rather uncanny things. You never quite know——'

'Well, if you don't know me when I get back this evening,' he said, with perfect gravity, 'the marriage that has been arranged, etc., had better not take place.'

'Mark!' Her voice had a sharp, startled note.

'That'll learn you!' he retorted, smiling. 'We'll make out our "para" to-morrow.'

And he heard no more of the subject.

They found Lady Forsyth alone in the drawing-room reading her midday post.

'My dears!' She sprang up to greet them. 'We've been wondering what had come to you.'

Mark explained, asked a few questions, backed casually towards the door—and vanished, leaving the women alone.

Bel had resolved that there should be neither awkwardness nor hesitation. Already she had rehearsed the little scene half a dozen times; and as the door closed, she turned to the small, upright figure near the piano, both hands flung out.

'Dear Lady Forsyth, you *are* going to forgive me, aren't you ?

I know I don't deserve it. But Mark has been so beautifully generous——'

'That is easier for him than for his mother,' Lady Forsyth rejoined with her disconcerting frankness: but her smile made partial atonement and she took the proffered hands. 'Not that I'm belittling Mark's generosity. It takes a just man to be generous even in exasperating circumstances; and Mark possesses that rare quality in a high degree. He particularly wants us all to make light of the whole matter; and—to please him, Bel, I can at least condone what I can't pretend to understand.'

This—as may be supposed—was not precisely the cue Bel had prepared for herself. But she had the adaptability of the born actress; and she recognised that Lady Forsyth had paid her the embarrassing compliment of speaking her mind as to a daughter.

'That's rather a crushing form of forgiveness!' she said, with the pretty droop of her lips. 'And I don't suppose it's much use trying to explain . . .'

'Not the slightest, my dear.' Lady Forsyth's tone was brisk but kindly. 'Facts, like beauty, are best left unadorned. I take it for granted you must have been very much upset to hurt a brave man so unnecessarily. Had your refusal been final, I could have better understood.'

The girl flinched at that and bit her lip. 'You don't sound much like forgiving me. And I don't think,' she made bold to add, 'that Mark would be quite pleased if he heard you.'

'He would probably bite my head off,' Lady Forsyth answered, taking the wind out of her sails. 'And if you want to make him angry with me, you can tell him what I have said. I should say just the same if he were present. Mark and I are in complete accord, however much we squabble. He knows my bark is worse than my bite: and you'll soon know it too, Bel. So don't let's write in brass what is meant to be writ in water. We shall gain nothing by making Mark our apple of discord. He's a very large apple, big enough for two! Now, after that, let me "behave" and show you to your room. Later on, you must see over the dear old house.'

'Yes. It's a dream of a place.' Bel swerved thankfully to a more congenial subject and the still more congenial reflection that all this stately, soft-toned beauty would some day be her own.

Once this wretched war was over, everything would go

swimmingly. He would settle down and shed some of his troublesome ideals. That flat in town—which she had already chosen and furnished mentally—would be the best possible antidote for what she vaguely styled ‘that sort of thing.’ She washed her hands and tidied her smooth hair in a frame of mind too serene even to be clouded by the prospect of a whole afternoon without Mark.

And downstairs, alone in the drawing-room, Lady Forsyth was playing Grieg’s Temple dance with a fire and fury that brought Keith in from the terrace, startled concern in his eyes.

‘Bless my soul, Helen! Who are you wanting to murder now? The Crown Prince or one of our own super-Solomons?’

‘Neither,’ she answered, crashing out the last double chord. Then, swinging round on the stool she faced him with heightened colour, head in air. ‘It’s Mark’s future wife. And I’m in terror that he’ll want to marry before he goes out. Keith—it’s not only wicked prejudice. I distrust her more than ever. She came to me with a pretty, ready-made apology which I am afraid I dislocated by my incurable candour. Then, having let fly for my own satisfaction, I proceeded to smooth things over for love of Mark. Told her my bark was worse than my bite.’

‘That I can swear to,’ Keith struck in smiling.

‘Still—by every oath I mustn’t use, if I was a natural savage instead of a Christian woman, who adores her son, I’d bite her with all my teeth.—There! Between that and Grieg, I feel a little better. But oh, you sagacious bachelor, you have your divine compensations. At times it’s a positive curse to love any human thing better than your own soul.’

‘It is that,’ Macnair agreed with quiet emphasis, as the door opened to admit Mark himself.

The air seemed still to vibrate with Helen’s impassioned outburst, and he glanced quickly from one to the other.

‘What have you two been plotting—eh?’

‘The wholesale reconstruction of the universe!’ Keith answered lightly; but Mark went straight to his mother and laid his hand on her.

‘She’s been working herself up about nothing,’ he said. ‘I can feel her quivering all through. Keith, you oughtn’t to encourage her. She’ll be needing all her reserves of strength, if she’s to pull through this. Would the drive to Bramleigh calm you down, Motherling? Or would it churn you up again, hearing me speak?’

'No: I should love it,' she answered in a low voice. The invitation and the touch of his hand had soothed her already, as nothing else could have done. It was as if, by some telepathic process, he had divined the cause of her emotional stress; and when the two girls came in he said casually, without removing his hand: 'I'm carrying Mums off with me to Bramleigh. You've had your drive, Bel, and the outing will do her a power of good.'

The announcement faintly ruffled Bel's conviction that all was for the best in this best of all possible worlds. But later in the evening, when her own turn came, when she wandered with Mark through the terraced gardens down to the river, he found her apparently satisfied, if not communicative, as regards her interview of the morning. Convinced of her own supreme sovereignty, instinct told her that she would gain nothing by 'giving the woman away.'

*(To be continued.)*

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